A TREASURY OF
MYSTIC TERMS

PART I
THE PRINCIPLES OF MYSTICISM

VOLUME 2
THE DIVINE ETERNITY

SCIENCE OF THE SOUL RESEARCH CENTRE

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JOHN DAVIDSON

SCIENCE OF THE SOUL RESEARCH CENTRE

Published by:
G.P.S. Bhalla, Secretary
Science of the Soul Research Centre
Radha Soami Satsang Beas
Guru Ravi Dass Marg, Pusa Road,
New Delhi 110005, India

First Edition 2003

10 09 08 07 06 05 04 03 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 III II I

ISBN 81-901731-0-3

Printed in India

EDITED AND LARGELY WRITTEN BY

JOHN DAVIDSON

WITH THE HELP OF AN INTERNATIONAL TEAM

A Treasury of Mystic Terms has been compiled using the collective skills of an international team of researchers, contributors, assistant editors and readers with a wide variety of religious and cultural backgrounds. All members of the team are spiritual seekers, most of whom have found inspiration and encouragement in the teachings of the mystics of Beas in India. All those involved have given freely to this project, both as a source of inspiration for themselves, and as a way of showing to others the essential unity behind all the apparent variety in religion, philosophy and mysticism.

Everybody has a perspective or a bias – coloured glasses through which they view the world. So although every attempt has been made to handle each entry within its own religious or mystical context, if any particular perspective is detected, it will inevitably be that of the contributors and their perception of mysticism. This does not mean, of course, that the contributors have always been in agreement. The preparation of the *Treasury* has often resulted in healthy debate!

SEE VOLUME 1 FOR THE LIST OF RESEARCHERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE TRANSLATIONS OF THE BUDDHIST *DHAMMAPADA* are founded mostly upon the work of S. Radhakrishnan and Narada Thera.

Many scholarly translations of Zarathushtra's *Gāthās* into European languages have been made from defective Pahlavi translations. The translations here are from the Avestan, and are based largely on the original work of Dr I.R.S. Taraporewala.

Quotations from the *Ādi Granth* are from the English translation of Manmohan Singh.

Most of the translations of the *Bhagavad Gītā* have drawn upon the earlier translation of Swāmī Tapasyānanda.

The sayings of Heraclitus are found only as fragments, quoted in the works of other writers of antiquity. Various scholarly numbering systems exist for these fragments, the system employed here being that used by Philip Wheelwright in *Heraclitus* (Princeton, 1959).

Most of the translations of Rūmī's *Maśnavī* are based upon the work of R.A. Nicholson.

The indigenous Guaraní of eastern Paraguay, made up of three large subgroups – the Mbyá, the Paí Cayuá and the Avá-Chiripá – are described in books and articles by the most notable experts in this field, Miguel Alberto Bartolomé, León Cádogan, Alfred Métraux and Egon Schaden. Most of the information used for the Guaraní mystical terms derives from these scholars' studies of the Mybá and Avá-Chiripá. If a term is general to all indigenous Guaraní, it is labelled (G); if a term is known only to apply to the Avá-Chiripá subgroup, it is labelled (AC).

The transliteration conventions used for all Avá-Chiripá terms are the same as those used in Miguel Alberto Bartolomé's article, *Shamanism and Religion Among the Avá-Chiripá,* which resulted from his field studies in the northeastern region of Paraguay in 1968 and 1969. Bartolomé explains that since Paraguayan Guaraní has an officially recognized written form, he does not use phonetic symbols except the letter 'y' for the sixth guttural vowel.

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Philip, tr. Wesley W. Isenberg; *Gospel of Thomas*, tr. Thomas O. Lambdin; *Hypostasis of the Archons*, tr. Bentley Layton); *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXI: *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2–7*, vol. 2, ed. Bentley Layton, 1989 (*Book of Thomas the Contender*, tr. John D. Turner; *Expository Treatise on the Soul*, tr. William C. Robinson Jr.; *On the Origin of the World*, tr. Hans-Gebhard Bethge, Bentley Layton); *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXII: *Nag Hammadi Codex I (the Jung Codex)*, vol. 1, ed. Harold W. Attridge, 1985 (*Gospel of Truth*, tr. Harold W. Attridge and George W. MacRae; *Prayer of the Apostle Paul*, tr. Dieter Mueller; *Treatise on the Resurrection*, tr. Malcolm L. Peel; *Tripartite Tractate*, tr. Harold W. Attridge and Dieter Mueller); *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXVI: *Nag Hammadi Codex III,5, The Dialogue of the Saviour*, ed. Stephen Emmel, 1984 (*Dialogue of the Savior*, tr. Stephen Emmel); *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXVII: *Nag Hammadi Codices III,3–4 and V,1, with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502,3 and Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 1081*, ed. Douglas M. Parrott, 1979 (*Eugnostos the Blessed* and *Sophia of Jesus Christ*, tr. Douglas M. Parrott); *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXVIII: *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII*, ed. Charles W. Hedrick, 1990 (*Allogenes*, tr. John D. Turner and Orval S. Wintermute; *Sentences of Sextus*, tr. Frederik Wisse; *Trimorphic Protennoia*, tr. John D. Turner); *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXX: *Nag Hammadi Codex VII, XIII*, ed. Birger A. Pearson, 1996 (*Paraphrase of Shem*, tr. Frederik Wisse; *Second Treatise of the Great Seth*, tr. Roger A. Bullard and Joseph A. Gibbons; *Teachings of Silvanus*, tr. Malcolm L. Peel and Jan Zandee; *Three Steles of Seth*, tr. James M. Robinson); *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXXI: *Nag Hammadi Codex VIII*, ed. John H. Sieber, 1991 (*Zostrianos*, tr. John H. Sieber); *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXXIII: *Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1, III,1 and IV,1 with BG 8502,2*, ed. M. Waldstein and Frederik Wisse, 1995 (*Apocryphon of John*, tr. Frederik Wisse); *A Pair of Nasoraean Commentaries*, tr. E.S. Drower, 1963; reprinted by permission of E.J. Brill Academic Publishers, Leiden, The Netherlands.

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Thanks are also due to Dr John Smith, Faculty of Oriental Studies, Cambridge University, for making specialist character fonts available to us.

Abbreviations

General

cf.	*confero* (L. I compare), compare
e.g.	*exempli gratia* (L. for the sake of example), for example
ff.	following (pages, lines, etc.)
i.e.	*id est* (L. that is), that is (to say), in other words
lit.	literally
p.	page
pp.	pages
viz.	*videlicet,* from the Latin *videre* (to see) + *licet* (it is permissible), used to specify items
▸2	See *A Treasury of Mystic Terms,* Part II

Dates

b.	born
c.	*circa,* about
d.	died
fl.	flourished
AH	*Anno Hegirae,* the Islamic dating system, from 622 CE, the Hegira *(al-Hijrah),* the year of Muḥammad's flight to Madīnah
BCE	Before Common Era
CE	Common Era

Languages

A	Arabic
AC	Avá-Chiripá
Am	Aramaic
Av	Avestan
C	Chinese
G	Guaraní
Gk	Greek
H	Hindi
He	Hebrew
J	Japanese
L	Latin

M	Marathi
Md	Mandaean
P	Persian
Pa	Pali
Pu	Punjabi
Pv	Pahlavi
S	Sanskrit
Su	Sumerian
T	Tibetan
U	Urdu

Sources Cited

See *Bibliography* for full details of published works. Published collections of the writings of Indian Saints have been referred to in source references as below. Other collections published as the *Bānī*, *Granthāvalī*, *Padāvalī* or *Shabdāvalī* of various Indian Saints have been similarly abbreviated.

Charaṇdās Jī kī Bānī	*Bānī*
Dariyā Sāhib ke chune hue Shabd	*Chune hue Shabd*
Dhanī Dharamdās Jī kī Shabdāvalī	*Shabdāvalī*
Kabīr Granthāvalī	*Granthāvalī*
Kabīr Sākhī Sangrah	*Sākhī Sangrah*
Keshavdās Jī kī Amīghūnt	*Amīghūnt*
Kullīyāt-i Bulleh Shāh	*Kullīyāt*
Ravidās Darshan	*Darshan*
Sant Guru Ravidās Vāṇī	*Vāṇī*
Shrī Nāmdev Gāthā	*Gāthā*
Tulsīdās kī Bārahmāsī	*Bārahmāsī*
Tulsī Sāhib Hāthrasvale kī Shabdāvalī	*Shabdāvalī*

Other texts cited are abbreviated as follows:

AAA	*Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 2 (translation), ed. & tr. W.R. Wright.
AAS	*Asfār-i Arba'ah*, Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (Mullā Ṣadrā).
ABP1–3	*Avesta: The Religious Book of the Parsees, from Professor Spiegel's German translation of the Original Manuscripts*, 3 vols., tr. A.H. Bleek.
ABSC	*Atma-Bodha of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya*, Swami Chinmayananda.
AF1–2	*The Apostolic Fathers*, 2 vols., tr. Kirsopp Lake. See *Acknowledgements*.
AMAS	*al-Mu'jam al-Ṣūfī*, Khānam Dr Sa'ād al-Ḥakīm.

AMBF	*Aḥādīś-i Maśnavī,* B. Furūzānfar.
ANT	*The Apocryphal New Testament,* tr. M.R. James. See *Acknowledgements.*
AOT	*The Apocryphal Old Testament,* ed. H.E.D. Sparks. See *Acknowledgements.*
ASDS	*Anurāg Sāgar,* Kabīr, tr. Dayāl Singh and Surjīt Singh.
ASLV	*Anurāg Sāgar,* Kabīr; Lakshmī Venkaṭeshvar Press.
ASOS	*A Seminar on Saints: Papers presented at the Second Seminar of the Union for the Study of the Great Religions,* ed. T.M.P. Mahadevan.
AYA	*The Holy Qur'ān,* tr. & commentary 'Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī.
BAK	*The Bahir (Illumination),* tr. & commentary Aryeh Kaplan. See *Acknowledgements.*
BC	*The Books of Jeu and the Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex,* tr. Violet MacDermot. See *Acknowledgements.*
BCB	*Breviarium Chaldaicum,* 3 vols., P. Bedjan.
BE	*Book of Enoch,* tr. R.H. Charles.
BGA	*The Bhagavad-Gītā As It Is,* A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.
BGR	*Bhaja Govindam,* C. Rajagopalachari.
BGT	*Bhagavad Gītā,* tr. Swāmī Tapasyānanda.
BRW1–2	*Buddhist Records of the Western World ("Si-Yu-Ki"),* 2 vols., S. Beal.
BS	*Bulleh Shah: The Love-intoxicated Iconoclast,* J.R. Puri and T.R. Shangari.
BSB	*Bhīkhā Sāhib kī Bānī;* Belvedere Printing Works.
CDB1–2	*Charaṇdās Jī kī Bānī,* 2 vols.; Belvedere Printing Works.
CDSS	*The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English,* Geza Vermes. See *Acknowledgements.*
CEDH	*A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English,* Ernest Klein.
CH	*The Clementine Homilies,* tr. Thomas Smith *et al.*
COT	*The Compass of Truth (Risala-i-Haq-Numa),* Muhammad Dara Shikoh, tr. Rai Bahadur Srisa Chandra Vasu.
CPM	*The Canonical Prayerbook of the Mandaeans,* tr. E.S. Drower. See *Acknowledgements.*
CTW	*Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings,* tr. Burton Watson. See *Acknowledgements.*
CV	*Call of the Vedas,* A.C. Bose.
CWJC1–3	*Complete Works of St John of the Cross,* 3 vols.-in-one, tr. & ed. E. Allison Peers. See *Acknowledgements.*
DB	*Dīvān-i Bāhū;* Allāh Wāle kī Qawmī Dukkān.
DDB1–2	*Dādū Dayāl kī Bānī,* 2 vols.; Belvedere Printing Works.

DDS	*Dhanī Dharamdās Jī kī Shabdāvalī;* Belvedere Printing Works.
DE	*The Discourses of Epictetus,* ed. Christopher Gill, tr. Robin Hard.
DEG	*Derekh Emunah,* Me'ir ibn Gabbai.
DF	*Divine Flashes,* Fakhruddin 'Iraqi, tr. W.C. Chittick and P.L. Wilson.
DG1–2	*Dariyā Granthāvalī,* 2 vols., D.B. Shāstrī.
DHA	*Dīvān-i Khwājah Ḥāfiẓ Shīrāzī,* ed. Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Anjavī Shīrāzī.
DHM	*Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ;* Malik Ghulām Muḥammad & Sons.
DHWC	*The Dīvān-i-Ḥāfiẓ,* 2 vols., Khwāja Shamsu-d-Dīn Muḥammad-i-Ḥāfiẓ-i-Shīrāzī, tr. H. Wilberforce Clarke.
DIH	*Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ,* ed. Qāzi Sajjād Ḥusayn.
DOI	*A Dictionary of Islam,* T.P. Hughes.
DOL	*The Dawn of Light,* Maharaj Sawan Singh.
DPS	*Dhartī par Svarg,* Daryāī Lāl Kapūr.
DSC	*Dariyā Sāhib (Bihārvāle) ke chune hue Shabd;* Belvedere Printing Works.
DSSB	*Dariya Sahib: Saint of Bihar,* K.N. Upadhyaya.
DSSE	*The Dead Sea Scrolls in English,* Geza Vermes (1988).
DSZ	*The Divine Songs of Zarathustra,* I.J.S. Taraporewala.
DYD	*Dariyā Yoga Darshan,* Ramman Dās.
ED	*Eastern Definitions,* Edward Rice.
EG	*The Epic of Gilgamesh,* N.K. Sandars.
EJCD	*Encyclopedia Judaica,* CD-ROM.
EKD	*The Early Kabbalah,* Joseph Dan and Ronald C. Kiener.
EKH	*The Essential Kabbalah: The Heart of Jewish Mysticism,* Daniel C. Matt. See *Acknowledgements.*
EMC	*Elimah Rabbati,* Moses Cordovero; Aḥuzat Yisra'el.
ESHS1–4	*Sancti Ephraemi Syri Hymni et Sermones,* 4 vols., T.J. Lamy.
FBM	*The Five Books of Moses,* tr. with commentary & notes, Everett Fox. See *Acknowledgements.*
FH	*Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam,* Ibn al-'Arabī, ed. Abū al-'Alā' 'Afīfī.
FIN	*Firefly in the Night,* Irene Nicholson. See *Acknowledgements.*
FLI	*Farhang-i Lughāt va-Iṣṭilāḥāt va-Ta'bīrāt-i 'Irfānī,* Sayyid Ja'far Sajjādī.
FMA	*al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah,* Ibn 'Arabī; Cairo, 1950.
FNI1–15	*Farhang-i Nūrbakhsh: Iṣṭilāḥāt-i Taṣawwuf,* 15 vols., Javād Nūrbakhsh.
GCI	*A Gallery of Chinese Immortals: Selected Biographies,* tr. Lionel Giles.
GD	*Gyān Dīpak,* Dariyā Sāhib, Hindi ms., tr. in *Dariya Sahib: Saint of Bihar,* K.N. Upadhyaya.

GDST	*Bar Guzīdah-'i Dīvān-i Shams Tabrīzī,* compiled by Ja'far Maḥjūb.
GIP	*The Graces of Interior Prayer,* A. Poulain, tr. L.L.Y. Smith. See *Acknowledgements.*
GMS	*al-Ghazālī the Mystic: A Study of the Life and Personality of Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī al-Ghazālī,* Margaret Smith.
GR	*Majmū'ah-'i Āsār-i Shaykh Maḥmūd Shabistarī: Gulshan-i Rāz, Sa'ādat-i Nāmah, Ḥaqq al-Yaqīn, Mir'āt al-Muḥaqqiqīn, Maratib al-'ârifīn,* ed. Ṣamad Muwaḥḥid.
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HGKA	*The History of God,* Karen Armstrong.
HHC	*Hua Hu Ching: The Later Teachings of Lao Tzu,* Hua-Ching Ni.
HJM	*History of Jewish Mysticism,* Ernst Muller.
HJPJ	*A History of the Jews,* Paul Johnson.
HPW	*Heraclitus,* P. Wheelwright. See *Acknowledgements.*
HQSA	*The Holy Qur'ān: English Translation of the Meaning and Commentary;* Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.
HR2	*Handschriften-Reste in Estrangelo-Schrift aus Turfan, Chinesisch-Turkistan II,* F.W.K. Müller.
HSB	*Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī,* tr. M. Muhsin Khan; www.islamworld.net/#hadith. See *Acknowledgements.*
HTU	*One Hundred and Twelve Upanishads and Their Philosophy,* A.N. Bhaṭṭāchārya.
HYK	*Hokken den yakuchû kaisetsu: Hokusôbon nansôbon kôrai daizôkyôbon ishiyamaderabon yonshu eiin to sono hikaku kenkyû,* Kazutoshi Nakagawa.
ID	*Icanchu's Drum: An Orientation to Meaning in South American Religions,* Lawrence E. Sullivan.
IGI	*The Influence of Greek Ideas on Christianity,* Edwin Hatch.
IK	*al-Insān al-Kāmil,* 'Azīz al-Dīn Nasafī, ed. M. Molé.
IP1–2	*Indian Philosophy,* 2 vols., S. Radhakrishnan. See *Acknowledgements.*
JB	*The Jerusalem Bible* (1966). See *Acknowledgements.*
JCL	*The CD-ROM Judaic Classics Library (The Soncino Talmud, The Soncino Midrash Rabbah, The Soncino Zohar, The Bible);* Institute for Computers in Jewish Life & Davka Corporation.
JMT	*The Jewish Mystical Tradition,* Ben Zion Bokser. See *Acknowledgements.*
JPS	*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures,* 2 vols.; Jewish Publication Society of America. See *Acknowledgements.*

JSB1–2	*Jagjīvan Sāhib kī Bānī*, 2 vols.; Belvedere Printing Works.
KAQ	*Kitāb al-Itḥāfāt al-Sanīyah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Qudsīyah;* Hyderabad, 1944.
KB	*The Jerusalem Bible*, English text rev. & ed. Harold Fisch; Koren Publishers. See *Acknowledgements.*
KBS	*Kullīyāt-i Bulleh Shāh*, Faqīr Muḥammad.
KDA	*Keshavdās Jī kī Amīghūnt;* Belvedere Printing Works.
KDG	*Kālidāsa Granthāvalī*, ed. Āchārya Sītārām Chaturvedī.
KDS1–2	*Kullīyāt-i Dīvān-i Shams: Maulānā Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Mashhūr bi Maulavī*, 2 vols., B. Furūzānfar.
KG	*Kabīr Granthāvalī*, ed. Shyām Sundardās.
KI	*The Koran Interpreted*, 2 vols., tr. A.J. Arberry. See *Acknowledgements.*
KJV	*The Authorized Version of the Bible (The King James Bible)* [1611]. See *Acknowledgements.*
KKA	*Ha-Kabbalah be Kitvei Rabbenu Baḥya ben Asher*, Ephraim Gottlieb.
KM	*Kashf al-Mahjūb: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufiism*, 'Alī b. 'Uthmān al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī, ed. & tr. R.A. Nicholson. See *Acknowledgements.*
KSA	*Akhrāvatī: Kabīr Sahab kā Pūrā Granth;* Belvedere Printing Works.
KSD1–10	*Kullīyāt-i Shams yā Dīvān-i Kabīr (Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz)*, 10 vols., ed. B. Furūzānfar.
KSS	*Kabīr Sākhī Sangrah;* Belvedere Printing Works.
KSS1–4	*Kabīr Sāhib kī Shabdāvalī*, 4 vols.; Belvedere Printing Works.
KSSY	*Kabīr Samagra*, 2 vols., Dr Yugeshwar.
KST	*Kullīyāt-i Shams-i Tabrīz;* Munshi Naval Kishore.
KTL	*The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion*, G. Widengren.
KWGN	*Kabir: The Weaver of God's Name*, V.K.Sethi.
LOSM	*Light on Sant Mat*, Maharaj Charan Singh.
LSMH	"Lower (Second?) Section of the Manichaean Hymns", tr. Tsui Chi. See *Acknowledgements.*
LTTC	*Lao-tzu: Te-tao Ching*, tr. & commentary Robert G. Henricks. See *Acknowledgements.*
LTTN	*Lao Tzu:* Text, Notes and Comments, Ch'en Ku-ying, tr. & adapted Rhett Y.W. Young and Roger T. Ames.
MA	*The Master Answers*, Maharaj Charan Singh.
MAAA	*al-Maqṣad al-Asná Sharḥ Asmā' Allāh*, al-Ghazālī.
MBM	"The *Mysteries of Baptism* by Moses bar Kepha Compared with the *Odes of Solomon*", R.A. Aytoun.
MBN	*The Most Beautiful Names*, Sheikh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti.

MBS	*Mīrābāī kī Shabdāvalī;* Belvedere Printing Works.
MDB	*Malūkdās Jī kī Bānī;* Belvedere Printing Works.
MDI	*Mystical Dimensions of Islam,* Annemarie Schimmel.
MEM	"Mesopotamian Elements in Manichaeism", G. Widengren. See *Acknowledgements.*
MGK	*The Meaning of the Glorious Koran,* Marmaduke Pickthall.
MHCP	*The Manichaean Hymn-Cycles in Parthian,* M. Boyce. See *Acknowledgements.*
MHK	*Miṣbāḥ al-Hidāyah wa-Miftāḥ al-Kifāyah,* 'Izz al-Dīn Maḥmūd Qāshānī, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Humā'ī.
MJR1–8	*The Mathnawī of Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī,* 8 vols., ed. & tr. with notes & commentary by R.A. Nicholson. See *Acknowledgements.*
ML	*Manichaean Literature,* J.P. Asmussen. See *Acknowledgements.*
MMM1–6	*Maśnavī Mawlvī Ma'navī,* 6 vols., Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī.
MMS	*Sri Guru Granth Sahib: English and Punjabi Translation,* 8 vols., tr. Manmohan Singh.
MPB	*A Manichaean Psalm-Book,* Part II, ed. & tr. C.R.C. Allbery. See *Acknowledgements.*
MR1–6	*Maśnavī Rūmī,* 6 vols., ed. Qażī Sajjād Husayn.
MSN	*Madhyamaka Shāstra of Nāgārjuna, with the Commentary (Prasannapadā) by Chandrakīrti,* ed. Swāmī Dvarikā Dās.
MTJM	*Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism,* Gershom G. Scholem.
MTP	"The Manichaean-Turkic Pothi-Book", L.V. Clark.
MUM	*Minor Upanishads,* tr. Swami Madhavananda. See *Acknowledgements.*
NG	*Nirbhay Gyān,* Dariyā Sāhib, Hindi ms., tr. in *Dariya Sahib: Saint of Bihar,* K.N. Upadhyaya.
NHS11	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XI: *Nag Hammadi Codices V,2–5 and VI,* ed. Douglas M. Parrott. See *Acknowledgements.*
NHS15	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XV: *Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X,* ed. Birger A. Pearson. See *Acknowledgements.*
NHS20	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XX: *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2–7,* vol. 1, ed. Bentley Layton. See *Acknowledgements.*
NHS21	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XXI: *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2–7,* vol. 2, ed. Bentley Layton. See *Acknowledgements.*
NHS22	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XXII: *Nag Hammadi Codex I (the Jung Codex),* vol. 1, ed. Harold W. Attridge. See *Acknowledgements.*
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NHS28	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XXVIII: *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII,* ed. Charles W. Hedrick. See *Acknowledgements.*
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NHS4	*Nag Hammadi Studies* IV: *Nag Hammadi Codices III,2 and IV,2. The Gospel of the Egyptians,* ed. Alexander Böhlig and Frederik Wisse. See *Acknowledgements.*
NPN	*Nāgārjuna's Philosophy of No-identity: With Philosophical Translations of the Madhyamaka-kārikā, Śūnyatā-Saptati and Vigrahavyāvartanī,* Ramachandra Pandeya and Manju.
OIP	*Outlines of Indian Philosophy,* M. Hiriyanna.
OTP1–2	*The Old Testament Pseudoepigrapha,* 2 vols., ed. J.H. Charlesworth. See *Acknowledgements.*
P	*Philebus,* Plato, tr. R.A.H. Waterfield.
PBC	*The Pagan Background of Early Christianity,* F.W. Halliday.
PCW1–10	*Philo,* 10 vols., tr. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker. See *Acknowledgements.*
PEC	*Plotinus (The Enneads),* tr. Stephen MacKenna.
PM1–5	*Philosophy of the Masters,* 5 vols., Huzur Maharaj Sawan Singh.
PMB1–16	*Plutarch's Moralia,* 16 vols., tr. F.C. Babbitt.
PNC	*A Pair of Nasoraean Commentaries,* tr. E.S. Drower. See *Acknowledgements.*
PS	*Pistis Sophia,* tr. Violet MacDermot.
PSB1–3	*Paltū Sāhib kī Bānī,* 3 vols.; Belvedere Printing Works.
PSGG	*Pistis Sophia: A Gnostic Gospel,* G.R.S. Mead.
QAL	*al-Qur'an,* tr. Syed Abdul Latif.
QI	*Qānūn-i 'Ishq, ya'nī Ḥalwā-yi Punjāb har dū ḥissah (Sharḥ Kāfiyān Bābā Bulleh Shāh),* Anwar 'Alī Ruhtakī.
RBK	*A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms: being an account by the Chinese monk Fâ-Hien of his travels in India and Ceylon (AD 399–414) in search of the Buddhist books of discipline, tr. & annotated with a Corean recension of the Chinese text,* James Legge.
RCM	*Shrī Rām Charit Mānas,* Tulsīdās; Gītā Press.
RD	*Ravidās Darshan,* ed. Achārya Prithvī Singh Āzād.
RNV1–4	*Rasā'il Shāh Ni'matullāhī Valī,* 4 vols., ed. Javād Nūrbakhsh.
SA	*The Secret Adam,* E.S. Drower. See *Acknowledgements.*
SAC	"Shamanism Among the Avá-Chiripá", Miguel A. Bartolomé. See *Acknowledgements.*

SB	*Sar Bachan*, Soami Ji Maharaj (Swami Shiv Dayal Singh).
SBB	*Sahajobāī kī Bānī;* Belvedere Printing Works.
SBE	*Sultan Bahu*, J.R. Puri and K.S. Khak.
SBP	*Sār Bachan Chhand-Band (Sār Bachan Poetry)*, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh.
SBS1–2	*Sant Bānī Sangrah*, 2 vols.; Belvedere Printing Works.
SBSU	*Sā'īn Bulleh Shāh;* Radha Soami Satsang Beas (Urdu).
SBU	*Ḥażrat Sulṭān Bāhū;* Radha Soami Satsang Beas (Urdu).
SCC	*On Sophistical Refutations, On Coming-to-Be and Passing-Away, and On the Cosmos*, Aristotle, tr. E.M. Forster and D.J. Furley.
SCT	*Sources of Chinese Tradition*, vol. 1, compiled T. de Bary, Wing-tsih Chan and Burton Watson, *et al.*
SD1–2	*Spiritual Discourses*, 2 vols., Maharaj Charan Singh.
SDST	*Selected Poems from the Dīvāni Shamsi Tabrīz*, ed. & tr. R.A. Nicholson. See *Acknowledgements.*
SFH	*Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, Dā'ūd al-Qayṣarī.
SG	*Spiritual Gems*, Maharaj Sawan Singh Ji.
SGRV	*Sant Guru Ravidās Vāṇī*, ed. B.P. Sharmā.
SHI	*The Spiritual Heritage of India*, Swami Prabhavananda. See *Acknowledgements.*
SIM	*Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, R.A. Nicholson. See *Acknowledgements.*
SL	*Spiritual Letters*, Baba Jaimal Singh Ji (1998 edn.).
SLW	*Sumerian Literature: A Preliminary Survey of the Oldest Literature in the World*, S.N. Kramer.
SMIK1–13	*The Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan*, 13 vols., Hazrat Inayat Khan.
SMS	*Sumerian Mythology: A Study of Spiritual and Literary Development in the Third Millenium BC*, S.N. Kramer.
SN	*Saint Namdev*, J.R. Puri and V.K. Sethi.
SNG	*Shrī Nāmdev Gāthā;* Government of Maharashtra (Marathi).
SNO	*Sant Namdev: His Life and Teachings*, J.R. Puri and V.K. Sethi.
SOA	*Sufis of Andalusia: The Rūh al-quds and al-Durrat al-fākhirah*, Ibn al-'Arabi, tr. R.W.J. Austin.
SP	*The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux*, recorded & ed. Joseph Epes Brown. See *Acknowledgements.*
SPK	*The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination*, William C. Chittick.
SPL	*The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rūmī*, William C. Chittick. See *Acknowledgements.*
SRBP	*Sefer ha-Rimmon (The Book of the Pomegranate)*, Moses de Leon, ed. Elliot R. Wolfson.

SSE1–15	*Sufi Symbolism: The Nurbakhsh Encyclopedia of Sufi Terminology*, 15 vols., Javad Nurbakhsh, tr. Terry Graham *et al.* See *Acknowledgements*.
SSMM	*Sabbatai Ṣevi: The Mystical Messiah*, Gershom G. Scholem.
SSR	*Shrī Sant Rohidās*, Ashok Prabhākar Kāmat.
ST	*Sharḥ-i Ta'arruf*, Abū Isḥāq Muḥammad ibn-i Ibrāhīm Bukhārī Kalābādī.
STG	*Shrī Tukārām Bāvāñchyā Abhangāñchī Gāthā*, ed. Shrī P.M. Lāḍ.
SWP	*Select Works of Plotinus*, tr. T. Taylor.
TBP	*Travels of Fah-Hian and Sun Yun, Buddhist Pilgrims from China to India*, S. Beal.
TDB	*Tulsīdās Jī kī Bārahmāsī*, Shri Goswāmī Tulsīdās Jī.
TFH	"Travels of Fa-Hsien"; in *Taisho Tripitaka*, vol. 51.
TGH1–3	*Thrice-Greatest Hermes*, 3 vols., G.R.S. Mead.
TL	*The Tree of Life: Chayyim Vital's Introduction to the Kabbalah of Isaac Luria (The Palace of Adam Kadmon)*, tr. Donald Wilder Menzi and Zwe Padeh.
TMU	*Thirty Minor Upaniṣads*, tr. by K. Narayanasvami Aiyar.
TNWT	*Tao: A New Way of Thinking*, Chang Chung-Yuan. See *Acknowledgements*.
TS	*The Teachings of Silvanus*, J. Zandee.
TSH1–2	*Tulsī Sāhib Hāthrasvale kī Shabdāvalī*, 2 vols.; Belvedere Printing Works.
TTCL	*Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tzu, tr. D.C. Lau.
TTCT	*Tao Te Ching: A New Translation*, Ch'u Ta-Kao. See *Acknowledgements*.
TTCW	*Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tzu, tr. John C. H. Wu.
TTQ	*The Thousand and Twelve Questions (Alf Trisar Shuialia)*, tr. E.S. Drower. See *Acknowledgements*.
TTT1–6	"Türkische Turfan-Texte", 6 parts, W. Bang and A. von Gabain.
TYN	*The New Testament*, tr. William Tyndale.
U1–4	*The Upanishads*, 4 vols., tr. & commentary Swami Nikhilananda. See *Acknowledgements*.
VC	*Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, Śrī Śankarācārya, tr. Swāmī Turiyānanda.
VE	*The Vedic Experience*, Raimundo Panikkar. See *Acknowledgements*.
VME1–2	*Vida* (Life) and other works, 2 vols., Marina de Escobar.
VP	*The Vishṇu Purāṇa*, tr. H.H. Wilson.
VTD	*Vinayapatrikā*, Tulsīdās; Gītā Press.
WALT	*The Way of Life According to Lao Tzu*, tr. & commentary Witter Bynner.
WCA1–2	*The Writings of Clement of Alexandria*, 2 vols., tr. W. Wilson.

WLLT	*The Way of Life Lao Tzu: A New Translation of the Tao Te Ching*, R.B. Blakney.
WLT	*The Wisdom of Laotse*, tr. Lin Yutang. See *Acknowledgements*.
WP	*The Wisdom of the Prophet (Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam)*, Muhyī-d-Din ibn 'Arabi, tr. (from Arabic to French) Titus Burckhardt, tr. (from French to English) Angela Culme-Seymour.
WZ1–3	*The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts*, 3 vols., arranged by Fischel Lachower and Isaiah Tishby. See *Acknowledgements*.
YGC	*Yahwe and the Gods of Canaan*, W.F. Albright.
ZM	*Zoroastrian Morals*, I.J.S. Taraporewala, contributed to *Encylopedia of Morals*, ed. Vergilius Ferm.
ZP	*Zoroastrian Philosophy*, I.J.S. Taraporewala, contributed to *A History of Philosophical Systems*.
ZSS1–5	*The Zohar*, 5 vols., tr. Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon.
ZT	*Zoroastrian Theology: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, M.N. Dhalla.

THE DIVINE ETERNITY

2.1 God and Eternity

Human beings have given many names to God throughout the ages, and have tried in numerous ways to describe the essential indescribability of the supreme Spirit. Some traditions have spoken of a Godhead in which the absolute, aloof and utterly transcendent divine Essence manifests Himself within Himself, so to speak, in various 'aspects', His furthest 'extension' being the Creator and merciful Father of all creation below. The Divine is also described as the eternal, immortal and true home of the soul.

Since many mystics have said that the soul is essentially one with God, some of the epithets of the Divine have also been applied to the God-realized soul or Saint, to the true nature of the soul, and to the divine creative power by which the creation is brought into being.

Key entries: **Allāh, Ahurā Mazdā, Ayn-Sof, Brahman, Father, God (among the early Greeks), God (in early Christianity), God (in Indian thought), God (in Judaism), Yahweh.**

Ābā' al-'Ulwīyah (A), **Ābā-yi 'Ulvī** (P) *Lit.* Fathers *(Ābā')* of Sublimity *('Ulwīyah);* the Sublime Fathers, the Superior Fathers, the Supreme Fathers. In Sufi terminology, the first expression, emanation or 'entification' of the absolute unmanifested Essence of God *(al-Dhāt)* is His Names *(Asmā'). Ābā' al-'Ulwīyah* is a name used by Ibn 'Arabī for the divine Names because all the lower planes of consciousness, along with all the multitudinous forms of creation, arise from the realm of the divine Names.

Below the Sublime Fathers are many descending levels of what are termed 'fathers and mothers *(ābā' wa-ummahāt)*', a metaphor for the creative forces from which each lower level is derived.

In Sufi terms, there are subtle levels, planes or refinements of consciousness that make up the entire creation. Starting from the top, the sequence is the absolute unmanifested Essence *(al-Dhāt),* followed by the Names *(Asmā'),* the Attributes *(Ṣifāt),* the Acts *(af'āl),* and the Signs or Works *(Āthār).* Ibn 'Arabī says that the Sublime Fathers are not the Essence itself, but are a prerequisite for the act of creation. The Sublime Fathers are vehicles of the divine will, and rank as the Primal Cause of creation.[1] In some descriptions, the Sublime Fathers are taken as references to the nine heavens or the seven 'planets' of medieval astronomy.

A number of mystical traditions have said in one way or another that in the process of creation, the highest, most sublime, nameless Essence *(al-Dhāt)* first manifests within Himself an eternal Being to be the Father of creation. It is from this Father that the divine creative power emanates. The Sublime Fathers may thus be understood as this true Father of creation. The Sublime Fathers are the First or Primal Cause, the true fundamental motivating force, while the creative Power, *al-'Aql al-Awwal* (Primal Intelligence), is the First Caused.

See also: **Anāmī, asmā'** (2.2), **Kalyptos, Keter**.

1. Ibn 'Arabī, in *AMAS* p.43, in *FNI7* p.82.

abad (A/P) *Lit.* endless, of eternal duration; eternity; commonly paired with *azal* (beginningless, eternal); hence, God, who is both *abad* (endless) and *azal* (beginningless). Jurjānī says that *abad* implies a duration of time "which cannot be contained in thought or by reflection".[1]

Abadī (eternal) is one of God's attributes. *Abadan abad* means from everlasting to everlasting. As a derived meaning, *abad* also means doomsday.

See also: **azal, al-Bāqī, al-Ḥaqq**.

1. Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-Ta'rīfāt,* in *FNI4* p.63; *cf.* in *SSE4* p.66.

abode (blessed, everlasting, native, of the Good) An abode is a place in which one lives, one's home, one's place of dwelling; also as native abode, blessed abode, everlasting abode and so on; some of the many terms used in the Mandaean and Manichaean literature for eternity, the eternal realm or region of God, the true, original, natural or native home of the soul, as in a Mandaean text where the soul bemoans her fall from God:

Poor am I! … A displaced (being),
for the *'uthras* (spirits) removed me;
They brought me from the abode of the Good.
Mandaean Prayer Book 165, CPM p.143

In another Mandaean poem, the soul is led by the "Deliverer" back to the "everlasting abode":

With him, with the Deliverer,
the souls … will ascend.
They will behold the place of light
and the everlasting abode….

Lamps of radiance are found before you,
beams of light behind you.
Kūshṭā (Truth) will come at your right,
and piety will smoothen your path.
For you there will be deliverance,
from here to the everlasting abode.
For the ferry that ferries over the elect
will set out towards you and take you across.
Mandaean Prayer Book 67; cf. CPM p.53

Likewise, in the Manichaean hymns, the Saviour gives his pledge to take the soul out of the realm of birth and death, returning it to its "native abode":

Hence, spirit, come! …
I shall lead you to the Height,
to your native abode.
I shall show you the pledge …
the hope you have yearned for.
Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VII:15–16; cf. MHCP pp.158–59

And:

Come, spirit, fear no more!
Death has fallen, and sickness fled away.

The term of troubled days is ended,
  its terror departed amid clouds of fire.

Come, spirit, step forth!
Let there be no desire for the house of affliction (the body),
  which is wholly destruction and the anguish of death.
Truly you were cast out from your native abode.
Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VII:1–4; cf. MHCP pp.154–55

Similarly, in another, where the eternal realm is called the "blessed abode":

I shall take you with might, and enfold you with love,
  and lead you to your home, the blessed abode.
Forever shall I show to you the noble Father:
  I shall lead you in, into His presence, in pure raiment.
Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VI:67–68; cf. MHCP pp.152–53

See also: **dār**, **ḍerā**, **dhām**.

achint, **achintā**, **Achint Prabhu**, **Achint Prabh**, **Achint Purakh** (Pu), **Achint Purush** (H) *Lit.* without *(a)* worry *(chintā)*, without care and anxiety, carefree, imperturbable. *Achint* is used descriptively of the Supreme Being, especially in conjunction with *Prabhu* (Lord), *Purush* (Being) and so on. *Achint* also means heedless, and is also used as an adverb in the sense of suddenly, unexpectedly, spontaneously, automatically, effortlessly, easily, without notice, especially when something significant or portentous, that is furthest from one's thoughts, happens suddenly and without prior warning. The term is used extensively in the *Ādi Granth:*

The Lord automatically *(achint)* accomplishes the tasks
  of those to whom the Name of God is dear.
Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 638, MMS

The domain of the incessant Unstruck (Sound),
  is governed by the imperturbable Lord *(Achint Purush):*
To this immortal world
  do the pure souls *(haṃsas)* really belong.
Dharamdās, Shabdāvalī, Mangal 11:10, DDS p.41

And:

Automatically *(achint)* have all my doubts been dispelled;
My mind now effortlessly *(achint)* abides in peace and pleasure;

> Spontaneously *(achint)*, the unstruck Melody resounds within me: …
> Spontaneously *(achint)* has all wisdom welled up in me;
> Spontaneously *(achint)* has the Lord-Master's support come to my hand.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1157, MMS*

The term has also been used by Kabīr and Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh for the lord or ruler of *achint dīp*, a realm within *pārbrahm*, the region immediately beyond the realm of the negative power.

See also: **achint dīp** (4.1).

achintya (S) *Lit.* not *(a)* thinkable *(chintya)*; hence, beyond thought and reason, beyond the intellect; unimaginable, inconceivable, unthinkable; used descriptively of God who is not accessible to sensory or intellectual experience, and is thus beyond the range of human thought and imagination:

> Without arms and legs am I *(Brahman)*,
> of inconceivable *(achintya)* power;
> I see without eyes, and I hear without ears.
> I know all, and am different from all.
> None can know me. I am the eternal Intelligence.
>
> *Kaivalya Upanishad 21; cf. MUM p.79*

The supreme consciousness of the *ātman* (self, soul) is also described as *achintya:*

> It is unseen, unrelated, incomprehensible, undefinable, inconceivable *(achintya)*, indescribable, the essence of the consciousness of the one Self.
>
> *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad 7*

'ad, le'ad (He) *Lit.* eternity, perpetuity; eternally; hence the expression, *shokhen 'ad*, He who dwells eternally, He who exists eternally, He who dwells in the realm of eternity, He who inhabits eternity, the eternity of God:

> For thus says the high and lofty One
> who inhabits eternity *(shokhen 'ad)*,
> whose name is Holy;
> I dwell on the high and holy place,
> yet with him also who is of a contrite and humble spirit,
> to revive the spirit of the humble,
> and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.
>
> *Isaiah 57:15, JCL*

One of a number of possible derivations of Eden is from the same root as *'ad*. If this were the correct derivation of the term, Eden would mean eternity.

See also: **eternity**, **'olam**.

adamah (He) *Lit.* land. See **promised land**.

ādi (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* beginning, that which marks the commencement; primal, first, primordial, primeval; original, pre-eminent, principal. Thus, Vālmīki, considered to have been the first Sanskrit poet, is called Ādi Kavi (the first poet), also an epithet of *Brahmā;* the work containing the teachings of Guru Nānak and his successors, which sings the glory of the primal Lord or the supreme Creator, is called the *Ādi Granth* (the First Book); the supreme Lord is called *Ādi Purakh* (primal Being); and Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh refers to the primal or essential soul and the primal Sound (Word) as *ādi surat* and *ādi Shabd. Ādi* is used in many other combinations. The *Bhagavad Gītā* describes Kṛishṇa as the *ādi Deva* (primal God):

> You are the supreme *Brahman,*
> the supreme abode, the utterly holy.
> You are the eternal, divine, primal God *(ādi Deva),*
> the unborn and all-pervading Being.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 10:12*

Ādi is also used as "the Beginning" in the sense of the timeless state before the creation had come into being, as in the opening lines of the *Ādi Granth:*

> True *(sach)* in the prime (*ādi,* the beginning),
> true *(sach)* in the beginning of ages *(jugādi),*
> true *(sach)* He is even now,
> and true *(sach)* He, verily, shall be, O Nānak.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1, MMS*

Similarly, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes:

> The Lord of the Soul *(Rādhā Swāmī)* do I adore,
> by whose grace many a soul has been awakened....
> The Beginning *(Ādi)* of all,
> Himself without beginning *(anādi),*
> from the beginning of the ages *(jugādi),*
> He has been the selfsame, nameless Being.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry, Mangalācharaṇ 1–3, SBP p.1*

See also: **Archē** (3.1), **Reshit** (3.1).

ādi dhām (H/Pu) *Lit.* original *(ādi)* residence *(dhām)*: original home, primal abode. The place where the Lord dwells is known as the primal abode because that is the source of all creation. It cannot even be called a place since it is uncreated, self-existent, beyond space and time, as well as beyond all creation and dissolution. Though, in imagination, it may seem to be far away, it is in fact the essence of all existence and is to be found very close, within everyone. It is called the original abode or true home of the soul because it is the soul's own source, from where it has descended into creation. Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh uses the expression:

> From the primal abode *(ādi dhām)*
> descends the Lord of the Soul *(Rādhā Swāmī)*;
> To the highest realm, the Lord of the Soul *(Rādhā Swāmī)* ascends.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 3:5.77, SBP p.34*

See also: **dhām**.

Ādi Nirañjan (Pu) *Lit.* primal *(ādi)* One without *(nir)* stain *(añjan)*: the primal immaculate One; the primordial and immaculate Lord; the primal Fount of Purity; the primal untainted and pure One; *añjan* also refers to *māyā*, hence, the primal One without *māyā*; the supreme Lord; also used specifically for the highest level or aspect of the Godhead, equivalent to *Anāmī Purush* or *Akah Purush*. In this state, the Divine is not manifest in any way; He is nameless and unknowable; He is actionless, neither doer nor creator. Thus, Mahārāj Sāwan Singh observes that it is not quite accurate to call Him One, for One implies two, and two are limited:

> When He was hidden in Himself, He was neither one nor two. He had no form or attributes. Exactly what He was cannot be described. The hidden One can only be described when He becomes manifest. In the unmanifested state, He was inconceivable, unknowable and nameless.... The *Gurus* have described the supreme Lord or the nameless Being as *Wad Purush* (Great Lord), *Swāmī* (Lord), *Khasam* (Husband, Master), *Ādi Nirañjan* and *Nirankār* (formless One).
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Philosophy of the Masters 4, PM4 pp.15–16*

Mahārāj Sāwan Singh adds that whenever He wishes to create, He does so by first manifesting Himself as *Ekankār* (the One) or *Sat Purush* (true Lord).[1]

The term is used in the *Ādi Granth*, as in the invocation:

> O my infinite and unequalled Lord (*apar apār,* from beyond the beyond),
> Thou art from the very beginning and the beginning of ages *(ādi jugādi).*
> O primordial and immaculate Lord *(Ādi Nirañjan),*
> Thou art my beloved Spouse.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1023, MMS*

And:

> The sun and the moon are not there,
> but the primal and immaculate Lord *(Ādi Nirañjan)* makes merry there.
>
> *Kabīr, Ādi Granth 1162, MMS*

In a general sense, *Nirañjan* means 'Lord', and *Ādi Nirañjan* should be distinguished from *Kāl Nirañjan* (the lord of death or time, the negative power) and *Jyot Nirañjan* (the lord of *sahans dal kanwal*), sometimes simply called *Nirañjan.*

See also: **Ekankār, Nirañjan.**

1. Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, *Philosophy of the Masters* 4, *PM4* p.29.

Ādi Purush(a) (S/H), **Ādi Purakh, Ādi Purkh** (Pu) *Lit.* primal *(ādi)* Being *(Purush, Purakh, Purkh),* the first or primal Being; the primal or primordial Lord; so called because He has always existed from before time and before creation, yet is omnipresent in His creation:

> The primordial Lord *(Ādi Purakh)* Himself creates the creation:
> the mortals (*jīa,* incarnate souls) and lower beings are engrossed in the love of *māyā* (illusion).
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 842, MMS*

And:

> O primal Lord *(Ādi Purakh),* Thy limit is not known.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 417, MMS*

adir (He) *Lit.* majestic, glorious; a quality of God and His Name or will; a biblical term used to convey the sense of God as king of all, whose mystic Name possesses His majesty and power, and is the active force in His creation:

> O Lord, our Lord, how majestic *(adir)* is Your Name in all the earth,
> who has set Your glory above the heavens.
>
> *Psalm 8:2, JCL*

> But there the glorious *(adir)* Lord will be unto us
> a place of broad rivers and streams;
> Wherein shall go no galley with oars,
> neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.
> For the Lord is our judge,
> the Lord is our lawgiver,
> The Lord is our king:
> He will save us.
>
> *Isaiah 33:21–22, KJV*

adon (He) *Lit.* lord, master, owner; root of *Adonai* (my Master, my Lord): an epithet of God, conveying a sense of the human condition, as humble slaves of the divine Lord and Owner:

> O Lord *(Adonai)*, our Lord *(Adoneinu)*,
> how glorious is Thy name in all the earth!
>
> *Psalm 8:2, JPS*

The prophet or mystic is also sometimes referred to as 'lord' by his disciples:

> And the sons of the prophets (*i.e.* the disciples) that were at Bet-El came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy Master *(Adon)* from thy head today?" And he said, "Yes, I know it; hold your peace."
>
> *2 Kings 2:3, KB*

See also: **Adonai**.

Adonai (He) *Lit.* my Lord, my Master; Lord of the worlds; an attributive name of God used in the Hebrew Bible; derived from *adon* (lord). *Adonai* was also used in place of the written name *Yahweh* when reading aloud, because of a taboo on vocalizing or writing the name *Yahweh,* which is spelled with the Hebrew letters corresponding to *YHWH.*

It is known that *YHWH* was spoken by Jews as *Yahweh* at least until the destruction of the first Temple in 586 BCE. However, as time passed, the name came to be regarded as too sacred to speak out loud, and other names of God were spoken in its place. By the third century BCE, *Adonai* had become the traditional name used as a replacement. When vowel points were added to the Hebrew written language in the sixth century CE, the rabbis used the vowel points belonging to *Adonai* for the written *YHWH,* in order to remind the reader of the name to use when speaking *YHWH* aloud.

Thus biblical occurrences of *YHWH* are almost always pronounced *Adonai (Ah-do-nai),* and are translated as Lord or God, as in a passage from *Genesis* where the actual word is written *Yahweh,* pronounced *Adonai,* and translated as God:

> And God *(Yahweh-Adonai)* remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark; and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided.
>
> *Genesis 8:1, JCL*

In another passage, the compound name *Yahweh Elohim,* pronounced as *Adonai Elohim,* is translated as Lord God:

> And the Lord God *(Yahweh Elohim)* formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the Breath of Life; and man became a living soul.
>
> *Genesis 2:7, KJV*

When the actual word *Adonai* appears in the Bible together with *Yahweh,* as in *Adonai Yahweh,* it is also pronounced *Adonai Elohim.* It is thought that originally *Adonai Yahweh* meant 'my lord God', and only later was *Adonai* taken to be a name of God, translated as 'Lord':

> For you did set them apart from among all the people of the earth, to be your inheritance, as you spoke by the hand of Moses your servant, when you brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord *(Adonai)* God *(Yahweh).*
>
> *1 Kings 8:53, JCL*

Why such a strong prohibition on pronouncing this outer name of God arose is uncertain. Generally, it is attributed to a sense of reverence, possibly as an extension of the traditional Near Eastern taboo customarily applied to anything truly holy, holiness itself being characterized by separateness and unapproachability. Other scholars view it as a misunderstanding of the third of the Ten Commandments prohibiting people from taking "the Lord's name in vain".[1] This commandment actually means, they say, that you should not swear falsely by the name of *YHWH* your God.[2]

It is also possible that some combination of these factors was coupled with a confusion of the outer, spoken names of God for the inner, mystic, ineffable Name that is beyond speech or pronunciation. It is not a case of choosing not to pronounce it. This inner, creative, divine Power is not made up of words, and simply cannot be expressed in language.

The medieval Kabbalists used a number of these attributive names of God

(e.g. Adonai, Elohim, El, Yahweh) in a kind of repetition practice which they called *hazkarat shemot* (remembrance of names). It was held that each name described a particular attribute of God, a particular level of spirituality or *sefirah* (emanation) in the series of *sefirot* by means of which the creation was believed to have taken place. The level of *Adonai* was thought to correspond to the level of dominion and rulership *(Malkut)* above the physical universe. As such it was understood as the gateway between the spiritual and the material realms:

> The name *Adonai* (Lord, corresponding to the *sefirah* or emanation of *Malkut*, or Kingdom) testifies to Him, in that He is Lord of all the worlds, and there is no one that knows (His worlds).... There are men who inherit only one world, according to their own level, as the teaching goes: "Every righteous man has a world of his own." Thus every member of the house of Israel inherits worlds according to his level in the realms above. But the Master of the worlds has no worlds, in the numerical sense. He is rather the Lord of all the worlds, and the name *Adonai* testifies to Him.
>
> *Zohar 3:275b–285a, Ra'aya Meheimna, WZ1 p.264*

See also: **El**, **Elohim Ẓeva'ot**, **Yahweh**.

1. *Exodus* 20:7.
2. "God, Names of", in *Encyclopedia Judaica, EJCD.*

agādh (H/Pu) *Lit.* not *(a)* shallow *(gādh);* deep, profound, having great depth, unfathomable, beyond measure, bottomless; hence, incomprehensible; descriptive of God, the creative Power, divine love and so on:

> Thou alone art, yea, Thou alone art there,
> and Thou alone shall ever be:
> O inaccessible, incomprehensible *(agādh)*, lofty and infinite Lord.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 723, MMS*

agādh bodh (H/Pu) *Lit.* knowledge *(bodh)* unfathomable *(agādh);* profound understanding or wisdom; that which is beyond the capacity of the intellect to measure or comprehend; also, one who cannot be fathomed by the intellect; descriptive of God:

> The Lord God is inaccessible, of unfathomable wisdom *(agādh bodh)*,
> illimitable, omnipotent and infinite.

O life of the world, show mercy unto Thy slave,
and save the honour of servant Nānak.

Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 667, MMS

agam (H/Pu), **agamya** (S/H) *Lit.* beyond *(a)* reach *(gam);* unreachable, unattainable, beyond access, inaccessible, unapproachable; beyond the reach of or inaccessible to the mind, the intellect and the senses; hence, unknowable, incomprehensible, unfathomable; used in Hindi and Punjabi in descriptions of God and eternity:

Thou art unapproachable *(agam),* compassionate and infinite Lord:
who can appraise Thy worth?
Thou hast created the whole universe,
and Thou art the Master of all the worlds.
No one knows Thine omnipotence, O my all-pervading Lord.

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1094, MMS

agam lok, **agam mahal** (H/Pu) *Lit.* inaccessible *(agam)* region *(lok)* or palace *(mahal);* a name given to the second aspect of the fourfold Godhead as described by some Indian Saints such as Kabīr and Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh. Counting downwards from *Anāmī* (the nameless One), the three further 'realms' or aspects of God are known as *agam lok* (inaccessible region), *alakh lok* (imperceptible region) and *sat lok* (true region). Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes that above *alakh lok* "is the inaccessible region *(agam lok):* marvellous (it is) – where the soul of a Saint alone gains access".[1]

1. Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, *Sār Bachan Poetry, Mangalācharaṇ* 5, *SBP* p.2.

Agam Purush (H), **Agam Purakh** (Pu) *Lit.* inaccessible *(agam)* Being *(Purush, Purakh);* the inaccessible Lord; the Supreme Being:

My inaccessible Lord *(Agam Purakh),* the inner knower,
makes man see with an impartial eye.
With the support of the Saints' society,
one embraces affection for the Lord.

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 966, MMS

Agam Purush is also used more specifically by some Indian Saints for the first descent or aspect of the nameless Being *(Anāmī Purush),* the supreme Lord, in the process of His gradual manifestation for the purposes of creation:

Unveiling the glory of the inaccessible Lord *(Agam Purush)*,
the soul establishes its banner in *agam lok*.
Only rare Saints have described the wonders of that realm,
and even they have said very little.

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 1:1.37–38, SBP p.5

In this context, *Agam Purush* is described as the ruler or Lord of *agam lok*, the second aspect or phase of the fourfold Godhead.

See also: **Anāmī**, **Rādhā Swāmī**.

Aḥad, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the One, the Unity; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh*. *Aḥad* implies a oneness that is absolute, all-encompassing and without boundary. God is a unity encompassing all, a oneness that is limitless. *Aḥad* (translated into English as 'one') is different from *wāḥid*, which means the number 'one'. The number 'one' inherently implies that there may also be 'two' or 'three' or 'others'; but *aḥad* implies absolute Oneness:

Say: "He is *Allāh*, the One *(al-Aḥad)* and Only."

Qur'ān 112:1, AYA

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

Ahurā Mazdā (Av), **Ormazd** (Pv) *Lit.* Lord of life *(ahu)* (and of) vast *(maz)* wisdom *(dā)*; or Lord of life *(ahu)*, creator *(dhā)* of the vast *(maz)*; a Zoroastrian term for the supreme Lord; the absolute, unmanifested Lord, as contrasted with *Ratu*, the manifested Lord. Most scholars agree that *Ahurā* is derived from the word *ahu*, *ah* meaning to be or to exist, *U* denoting the Lord. *Ahu* therefore means Lord of Existence or Lord of Life, the Living Lord or the Living God.

There is some debate, however, over the meaning of the term *Mazdā*. Until the middle of the twentieth century, all Western scholarly studies of Zarathushtra's writings had been made from Pahlavi (Middle Persian) translations dating from the first few centuries of the Christian era, long after Zarathushtra had lived. Zarathushtra's original language was Avestan, which is closely related to ancient Sanskrit. When the Pahlavi translations were compared with the Avestan, significant mistranslations were discovered. One such misunderstanding, according to Avestan and Sanskrit scholar I.J.S. Taraporewala, was to mistake the origin of the second syllable of *Mazdā*.

There is agreement that *maz* means great or vast. But the Pahlavi translators, and the Western scholars who followed them, confused the Sanskrit root

dhā (to create) with *dā* (to know). Hence, says Taraporewala, *Mazdā* means 'Creator of the vast (universe)'.[1]

Although in later Zoroastrianism, God was commonly known as *Ahurā Mazdā*, it is actually the least used of all the variants in Zarathushtra's own writings (the *Gāthās*), where God is more frequently called *Mazdā Ahurā*, or just *Mazdā* or *Ahurā*.

In Zoroastrian sacred writings, the heaven of *Ahurā Mazdā* is said to be boundless light, "whose end none can see on any side".[2] He is also omnipresent:

> Though present in everything, He is unseen anywhere.
>
> *Dēnkard 3:174, in ZT p.220*

Zoroastrianism is popularly known as the religion of dualism in which *Ahurā Mazdā* or *Ormazd* is in eternal conflict with the devil or *Ahriman*. Although this became a prominent feature of the later religion, the belief is not supported by Zarathushtra's own writings. In one of his *Gāthās*, for example, he explains how *Ahurā Mazdā* is the creator of both the positive and the negative powers or spirits *(mainyu):*

> Now to eager listeners I will speak
> of the two *mainyu*, *Mazdā* did create....
> That you, grown perfect, may attain His Light....
>
> The first created were these *mainyu*, two:
> as twin co-workers they manifest themselves;
> Yet in each thought and word and deed these two
> forever disagree: one's good, the other's bad.
> And of these two, the wise do choose aright,
> while the unwise choose not thus – and go astray.
>
> And when together these two *mainyu*
> did foregather at creation's early dawn,
> life *(gaya)* did one make, the other: death *(ajyāitī);*
> And thus creation's purpose is achieved:
> Darkness of mind for the followers of Untruth *(dregvānts)*,
> brightness of mind for the followers of Truth *(ashāvants)*.
> Of these two *mainyu*, the worldly man *(dregvānt)*
> will always choose to perform evil deeds,
> while the spiritual man will choose the Truth.
>
> He who would clothe himself in imperishable light,
> He who would satisfy the Lord *Ahurā:*

Let him through deeds of Truth choose *Mazdā*'s Way.
Zarathushtra, Yasna 30:1, 3–5; cf. DSZ pp.127, 136, 140, 144

1. *cf.* I.J.S. Taraporewala, *Zoroastrian Morals, ZM* p.7 (n.14); *Zoroastrian Philosophy, ZP* p.3.
2. *Yasht* 13:3; *cf. ABP1* p.81.

aja (S), **ajanmā** (S/H) *Lit.* not *(a)* born *(ja, janmā)*; not subject to birth, unborn, birthless; hence, deathless (since birth implies death); thus, God, the one who existed before time was created, who is beyond all beginnings and all endings, who has never come into being because He was never nonexistent. In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Kṛishṇa, who is identified with *Brahman*, is said to be "unborn *(aja)*" and "beginningless":

He who knows me as the unborn *(aja)*,
the beginningless *(anādi)*,
and the lord of all the worlds –
He, among mortals, becomes without delusion,
and is liberated from all sins.
Bhagavad Gītā 10:3; cf. BGT

Or as Ravidās says:

Unparalleled are You, unborn *(ajanmā)*,
omniscient and infinite,
undifferentiated *(abhed)*, imperceptible,
ever abiding, and self-activated.
Ravidās, Vāṇī 177:4, SGRV p.139

The soul has also been described as unborn in the sense that it is the eternal essence of being, always one with the supreme Lord, and is thus immortal and unchangeable:

That infinite, unborn *(aja)*, undecaying, undying,
immortal and fearless self *(ātman)* is *Brahman*.
Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 4:4.25

And as Kṛishṇa says in the *Bhagavad Gītā*:

The soul is never born, nor does it die at any time,
nor having once come to be, will it again cease to be.

It is unborn *(aja)*, eternal, permanent and primeval,
it is not slain when the body is slain.
Bhagavad Gītā 2:20

The term is also used for a number of deities and mythological figures.

See also: **ayoni**.

ajar(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* without *(a)* old age *(jarā)*; not subject to aging or decay, ageless; ever young; undecaying; imperishable, unchanging, immutable; often used with *amar* (not subject to death, immortal) as *ajaramar* (undecaying and immortal); commonly used descriptively of God. Malūkdās writes:

Knowing the high position of the Lord,
I moved about sadly here and there
(trying to find Him).
Now, says Malūkdās, I have found
the immortal *(amar)*, ageless *(ajar)* Lord.
Malūkdās, Bānī, Chetāvnī 7:5, MDB p.13

See also: **ajar** (5.1).

akah, **akath** (H/Pu), **akathya** (S) *Lit.* not *(a)* speakable (*kathya, kath, kah)*; that which cannot be spoken or uttered; unutterable, unspoken, ineffable, beyond speech; hence, indescribable; descriptive of the supreme divine Essence:

Now how can I describe the Nameless?
It is only a hint to speak of It
as indescribable *(akah)* and boundless.
Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 34:3.22, SBP p.283

Indescribable *(akah)*, boundless,
unfathomable and nameless.
Such is my beloved Lord of the Soul *(Rādhā Swāmī)*.
Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 3:1:1, SBP p.8

If I describe the beautiful being, I cannot describe Him;
If I discourse on the ineffable *(akath)* Lord,
I cannot find (express) His worth.
Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 412, MMS

It is through His creative Power or divine Name that He can be "described" or known:

> Through the beauteous Name (*Shabd*, Word)
> the indescribable *(akath)* Lord is described.
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 128, MMS*

Akath is also used for the divine creative power, as in the expression *akath Kathā* (unutterable Story).

See also: **akath Kathā** (3.1).

akah lok (H/Pu) *Lit.* indescribable *(akah, akeh)* region *(lok)*: a name given by Kabīr, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh and some other Indian Saints to the highest 'region' of the Godhead and the abode of *Anāmī Purush* (the nameless Being):

> Beyond that, O brother, is the indescribable realm *(akah lok)*,
> where *Anāmī Purush* resides.
> But only he can know it, who reaches there,
> for He is beyond all words and description.
>
> *Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 1, Bhed Bānī 22:29, KSS1 p.67*

Akāl (Pu) *Lit.* without *(a)* time *(kāl)*; timeless, changeless; also, deathless, immortal, since *kāl*, by extension, also means death; that which is beyond the reach of death, time and change; not conditioned by or subject to any limitations; beyond limits; an epithet or name of God, the positive power, as distinct from *Kāl* as the negative power. Mahārāj Sāwan Singh points out that although *Akāl* is a part of the eternal Godhead, yet He is still created by the Lord:

> Saints believe that the Lord or Master or Creator has limitless consciousness. He is the positive power. He is an unfathomable ocean of love and bliss. He has many powers or agents who look after the creation and its maintenance. These are described as beings or *purushas*. The supreme Lord is accordingly called the Supreme Being or *Param Purush*. Amongst these powers is the negative power, or *Kāl Purush*, who is the creator of the universe.... *(Kāl Purush)* is himself sustained by the timeless Lord *(Akāl Purush)*. All this lower creation is within the power of *Kāl*. Both *Kāl* and *Akāl* were created by the supreme Lord. The work of creation and its evolution has been handed over to them.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Philosophy of the Masters 4, PM4 p.76*

See also: **Kāl** (6.1).

Akāl Purush, **Akāl Purakh**, **Akāl Purkh** (Pu) *Lit.* Timeless *(Akāl)* Being *(Purush, Purakh)*, the eternal Being, beyond all change and dissolution; the Being outside of time; the immortal Lord; the positive power:

> We are birds, O my wandering soul,
> and *Akāl Purkh* is the tree.
> *Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 235, MMS*

The name is used – particularly in the *Ādi Granth*, but by other mystics as well – for the Lord of *sat lok* (true region) or *sach khaṇḍ* (true region), the fifth spiritual region and the first of the absolutely eternal realms.

See also: **Anāmī**.

akhaṇḍ(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* without *(a)* break *(khaṇḍ)*; undivided, whole, intact, indivisible, unfragmented; that which cannot be broken into parts; seamless; hence, ceaseless; indestructible; perfect; descriptive of God and the eternal realm. Thus, Tulsīdās describes God as

> the one who transcends all attributes,
> who is indivisible *(akhaṇḍ)*, infinite, without beginning or end.
> *Tulsīdās, Rām Charit Mānas 1:143.2, RCM p.155*

Akhaṇḍ is also used to describe the ceaseless *(akhaṇḍ)* music of the Creative Word, as in the expression *akhaṇḍ Kīrtan* (ceaseless Music).

Ākhir, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Last; the end; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh*; an epithet of *Allāh*, commonly used in conjunction with *al-Awwal* (the First), indicating that *Allāh* encompasses the beginning and the end of all things:

> He is the First *(al-Awwal)* and the Last *(al-Ākhir)*,
> the Evident and the Hidden:
> And He has full knowledge of all things.
> *Qur'ān 57:3, AYA*

One who sees the end *(ākhir)* and the beginning sees God. Thus, Rūmī employs a wordplay on *ākhir*, implying God, and the *ākhur* (a stable for horses),

symbolizing this world. The mystic, he says, sees the divine Reality beyond this world:

> The *Shaykh* who has acquired sight by the light of God
> has become acquainted with the end and the beginning.
> He has shut, for God's sake, the eye that sees the stable *(ākhur)*;
> He has opened, in preference, the eye that sees the end *(ākhir)*.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:1567–68; cf. MJR2 p.302*

Using the same wordplay, Rūmī also points out that those who see the world of phenomena alone, see only delusion:

> The eye that sees the end *(ākhir)* can see truly;
> The eye that sees only the stable *(ākhur)*
> is in delusion and error.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:2583; cf. MJR2 p.140*

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

akshar(a) (S/H), **achhar** (H/Pu), **akkhar** (Pu) *Lit.* not *(a)* perishable *(kshar)*; imperishable, indestructible, undecaying, unchanging, immutable; thus, *Akshar* – the Imperishable, the imperishable One, the imperishable Being. These terms also mean letter or syllable.

Akshara, as the Imperishable, is used in the *Upanishads* as an epithet of *Brahman,* the absolute Reality. According to the story of the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad,* the sage, Yājñavalkya, is being questioned by the woman philosopher, Gārgī. She is told that everything is pervaded by *ākāsha. Ākāsha* is the energy filling and comprising the 'space' out of which each area of creation comes into being. At the physical level, it is the all-pervading energy filling physical space, giving rise to the phenomena of the physical universe.

Gārgī then asks what it is that pervades *ākāsha.* It is a good question, and seemingly unanswerable. Yājñavalkya, however, replies that *Brahman,* the Imperishable *(Akshara),* the omnipresent, eternal Reality, beyond all attributes or qualities, pervades everything:

> That (which pervades *ākāsha*), O Gārgī,
> the knowers of *Brahman* call the Imperishable *(Akshara).*
> It is neither gross nor subtle,
> neither short nor long,
> neither red (like fire) nor moist (like water).
> It is neither shadow nor darkness,
> neither air nor *ākāsha.*

It is unattached.
It is without taste or smell,
without eyes or ears, without tongue or mind.
It is non-effulgent, without vital breath or mouth,
without measure, and without exterior or interior.
It does not eat anything, nor is It eaten by anyone.

Verily, under the mighty rule of this Imperishable *(Akshara)*, O Gārgī,
the sun and moon are held in their respective positions.
Under the mighty rule of this Imperishable *(Akshara)*, O Gārgī,
heaven and earth are held in their respective positions.
Under the mighty rule of this Imperishable *(Akshara)*, O Gārgī,
moments, *muhūrtas* (48 minutes),
days and nights, fortnights, months, seasons
and years are held in their respective positions....

Whosoever in this world, O Gārgī,
without knowing this Imperishable *(Akshara)*,
offers oblations, performs sacrifices,
and practises austerities,
even for many thousands of years,
finds all such acts to be but perishable.
Whosoever, O Gārgī, departs from this world
without knowing this Imperishable *(Akshara)* is miserable.
But he, O Gārgī, who departs from this world
after knowing the Imperishable *(Akshara)* is a knower of *Brahman*.

Verily, that Imperishable *(Akshara)*, O Gārgī,
is never seen, but is the Seer.
It is never heard, but is the Hearer.
It is never thought of, but is the Thinker.
It is never known, but is the Knower.

Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 3:8.8–11, U3 pp.230–32

The *Muṇḍaka Upanishad* also uses the term *akshara* as descriptive of *Brahman:*

That which is luminous, more subtle than the subtle,
wherein are centred all the worlds and those that dwell in them:
That is the imperishable *Brahman (akshara Brahman)*.
That is life *(prāṇa);* That is speech and mind;
That is true; That is immortal;
That, my dear, is the target: aim at That.

Muṇḍaka Upanishad 2:2.2

Similarly, in the *Bhagavad Gītā, Brahman* is called the *Paramākshara,* when Kṛishṇa says:

> *Brahman* is the supreme Imperishable *(Paramākshara).*
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 8:3*

And:

> The state that is called
> the unmanifested Imperishable *(avyakta Akshara),*
> is the ultimate goal of all.
> That is my supreme abode,
> attaining which man is not reborn.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 8:21; cf. BGT*

However, although the *Bhagavad Gītā* speaks of the supreme *Brahman,* it also says that the Supreme Being *(Paramātmā* or *Purushottam)* is beyond both the perishable *(kshara)* and its opposite, the Imperishable *(Akshara):*

> In the world, there are two types of being *(purush):*
> the perishable *(kshara)* and the Imperishable *(Akshara).*
> To the perishable *(kshara)* belong all manifested beings,
> while the Imperishable *(Akshara)* remains aloof and unchanging.
> But there is yet another,
> known as the supreme Spirit *(Paramātmā)* or the *Purushottam,*
> and who as the eternal Lord *(Īshvara)*
> pervades throughout the three worlds and sustains them.
> Since I (Kṛishṇa) transcend the perishable *(kshara)*
> and am also superior to the Imperishable *(Akshara),*
> I am known as the *Purushottam* in the world,
> and in the *Vedas.*
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 15:16–18*

It seems, therefore, that the writers of the *Upanishads* considered *Brahman* to be the highest Reality, of which *Akshara* is used as an epithet. There is some ambiguity about it in the *Bhagavad Gītā,* however, and different commentators, ancient and modern, have given different interpretations.

Some later Indian mystics have pointed out that according to descriptions given in the *Upanishads* and the *Purāṇas, Brahman* actually refers to a level below that of the Supreme in the hierarchy of creation. Vedantic terms such as *nirguṇa Brahman* (*Brahman* without attributes), *saguṇa Brahman* (*Brahman* with attributes), as well as *avyākṛita, hiraṇyagarbha* and other terms used in descriptions of *Brahman* and its manner of manifestation, all point

to *Brahman* as the source of *māyā* (illusion). According to these mystics, *Brahman* is the highest and most subtle level of the mind.

Therefore, to distinguish between *Brahman* (or *Brahm*) and what is higher, they have referred to *Brahm* as *kshar*, to the realm beyond *Brahm* as *akshar* or *pārbrahm*, and to what lies beyond that as *nihakshar*. Both Kabīr and Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh have used this terminology. Referring to the eternity beyond *nihakshar*, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes:

> The realm which is beyond
> the perishable *(kshar)*, the imperishable *(akshar)*
> and that which is
> even beyond the imperishably imperishable *(nihakshar):*
> There does Your devotee offer his prayer to You.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 7:1.10, SBP p.69*

Akkhar and *achhar* also mean letter(s) or syllable(s). From letters, a multiplicity of different words can be formed while the letters themselves remain unchanged. Hence, in a play on the word, *akkhar* has also been used for the Creative Word, which – in its ultimate sense – is synonymous with God, the truly imperishable One. Thus, Kabīr wrote of the Sanskrit alphabet, which contains fifty-two letters:

> Through these fifty-two letters *(achhar)*,
> the three worlds and all else are described:
> These letters *(akkhar)* shall perish:
> That imperishable Lord (*Akkhar*, Word)
> cannot be described through these letters.
>
> Where there is speech,
> there are letters (*achhar,* words)
> Where there is no speech,
> there the mind remains not stable (cannot enter).
> Both in speech and silence, He, the Lord abides:
> as He is, none can know Him as such.
>
> *Kabīr, Ādi Granth 340, MMS*

And again:

> Man has joined the fifty-two letters *(akkhar):*
> but he cannot recognize the one Word *(Akkhar)* of God.
>
> *Kabīr, Ādi Granth 343, MMS*

See also: **Akkhar** (3.1), **akshara** (4.1), **Brahman, kshara** (6.2).

akshara Avyakta (S) *Lit.* the imperishable *(akshara)* Unmanifested *(Avyakta)*, the unmanifested Imperishable; a superlative form of *Akshara*, found mainly in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, where it is contrasted with the manifested *(vyakta)* form of *Akshara*. The manifested *Akshara (vyakta Akshara)* is described as the *guru* – the incarnation or personification of the unmanifested *Akshara*. In the case of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, this means Kṛishṇa.

Kṛishṇa, for example, is asked by Arjuna whether devotion to the manifest or unmanifested form of God is superior. Kṛishṇa replies that both are equally as good, but that it is far easier to approach the Unmanifested through the manifest – in this case the divinely human form of Kṛishṇa:

> I consider those to be the most perfect in *yoga*
> who, with their minds intently fixed on me,
> worship me with complete faith.
>
> But those who – restraining all the senses,
> remaining even-minded in all circumstances,
> dedicated to the welfare of all creatures –
> contemplate on the undefinable, unthinkable,
> unchanging, immovable, immutable, all-pervasive,
> and unmanifested Imperishable *(akshara Avyakta)* –
> They also come to me indeed.
>
> But the difficulty of those who attempt
> to fix their minds on the Unmanifested *(Avyakta)*
> is indeed greater.
> Because – for embodied beings –
> it is hard to have access to the Unmanifested *(Avyakta)*.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 12:2–5; cf. BGT*

Akshar(a) Purush(a) (S/H), **Achhar Purush** (H/Pu) *Lit.* imperishable *(akshar, achhar)* Being *(Purush)*; the imperishable Lord; a name of God:

> The strong fortress of delusion is shattered
> when assailed by *Shabd*.
> The imperishable Lord *(Achhar Purush)* is a tree:
> Go! Merge into Him.
>
> *Dharamdās, Shabdāvalī, Nām Mahimā 3:2, DDS p.6*

alakh (H/Pu), **alakshya** (S) *Lit.* not *(a)* visible *(lakh)*; invisible; hence, in a general sense, imperceptible, undiscernible; that which cannot be seen or

perceived; from the Hindi *lakhnā* (to see); used in the *Ādi Granth* for God and the eternal realm:

> Within the body abides the Lord Himself:
> He is undiscernible *(alakh)*, and can be discerned not.
> The silly apostate (*manmukh*, a follower of the mind)
> understands this thing not, and goes abroad in search of Him.
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 754, MMS*

Alakh is also used more specifically for one of the aspects of the Godhead above *sat lok* (true region).

See also: **alakh lok**, **Alakh Purush**.

alakh lok (H/Pu) *Lit.* invisible or imperceptible *(alakh)* region *(lok);* a name given by some Indian mystics to the third aspect of the fourfold Godhead, counting downwards from *Anāmī* (the Nameless). This 'realm' is said to be imperceptible and invisible because when the soul becomes completely one with God, perception and vision – of however subtle a nature – are no longer meaningful. In that state of absolute oneness, there is no distinction between the perceiver and the perceived. Kabīr describes the ascent of the soul above *sat lok* (true region), the first aspect of eternity encountered on the ascent from below:

> Next is the imperceptible region *(alakh lok)*, O brother,
> where the imperceptible Lord *(Alakh Purush)* reigns.
> Billions of suns pale into insignificance
> beside the brilliance of a single pore (of His body):
> Such is the imperceptible One *(Alakh)* I behold.
>
> *Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 1, Bhed Bānī 22:27, KSS1 p.67*

See also: **Anāmī**, **Rādhā Swāmī**.

Alakh Nirañjan (H/Pu) *Lit.* the Imperceptible *(Alakh)* Immaculate *(Nirañjan);* the imperceptible, immaculate One; the invisible, taintless One; the unseen, pure One; the imperceptible Lord untouched by *māyā;* one of the many names for God used in the *Ādi Granth:*

> The one light of the unseen and pure Lord *(Alakh Nirañjan)* alone
> is pervading everywhere.
>
> *Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 507, MMS*

The term is also used by Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh for the lord or ruler of *sahans dal kanwal*, the astral realm.

Alakh Purush (H) *Lit.* Imperceptible *(Alakh)* Being *(Purush);* the third aspect of the fourfold Godhead, as described by some Indian Saints such as Kabīr and Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh. Counting downwards from *Anāmī* (the nameless One), the three further realms or aspects of God have been called *agam lok* (inaccessible region), *alakh lok* (imperceptible region) and *sat lok* (true region). Each of these 'stages' has its own 'lord *(purush)*' known, respectively, as *Agam Purush, Alakh Purush* and *Sat Purush.* Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes:

> Beyond *(sat lok)* is the court of the imperceptible Lord *(Alakh Purush):*
> His real essence is experienced by the soul.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry, Mangalācharaṇ, Chaupaī 4, SBP p.2*

And:

> How can I sing the glory of the imperceptible Lord *(Alakh Purush):*
> (In His presence), billions of suns and moons pale into insignificance.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 5:1.14, SBP p.43*

See also: **Anāmī**, **Rādhā Swāmī**.

'ālam al-bāqī (A), **'ālam-i bāqī** (P) *Lit.* everlasting *(bāqī)* world *('ālam);* eternity; the eternal, everlasting and permanent world beyond all death and destruction; contrasted with *'ālam al-fānī* (the perishable world).

See also: **al-Bāqī**.

'ālam al-hāhūt (A), **'ālam-i hāhūt** (P) *Lit.* world *('ālam)* of absolute divinity *(hāhūt);* in Sufi doctrine, higher and finer than *'ālam al-lāhūt,* the realm of divinity, although *'ālam al-lāhūt* is sometimes used to include all the realms of pure spirit.

See also: **al-hāhūt**.

'ālam al-lāhūt (A), **'ālam-i lāhūt** (P) *Lit.* world *('ālam)* of divinity *(lāhūt);* world of the Godhead. In some usages, this region is described as the ultimate. In

others, it is the lowest of a number of purely spiritual stages. *Lāhūt* means divinity, and is used in contrast with *nāsūt* to convey the dual nature of man: *lāhūt* refers to the divine aspect of man, *nāsūt* to the limited, human aspect.

See also: **al-hāhūt**, **al-lāhūt** (5.1).

'Alī, al- (A/P), **al-'Alīy** (A) *Lit.* the High One, the Most High, the Exalted; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh*. *'Alī* connotes both high and noble. God is the most high, because while permeating and encompassing all creation, He is also above all creation. The soul's journey from the sleep of worldly mindedness to the bliss of union is often depicted as a journey up through successive planes *(ṭabaqāt)* till it reaches the highest – God:

> His throne comprises the heavens and earth;
> The preserving of them oppresses Him not;
> He is the All-High *(al-'Alīy)*, the All-Glorious.
>
> *Qur'ān 2:255, KI*

> To Him belongs
> all that is in the heavens and on earth:
> And He is the Most High *(al-'Alīy)*, the Most Great.
>
> *Qur'ān 42:4; cf. AYA*

See also: **'Alī** (▸2), **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

'Alīm, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the All-Knowing, the Omniscient; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh;* at all times and in all places, He knows all. *'Alīm* implies wisdom, right thinking, right acting and being learned, as well as simply knowing. The *Qur'ān* says:

> To *Allāh* belong the East and the West;
> Wherever you turn:
> there is *Allāh*'s countenance.
> For *Allāh* is all-embracing, all-knowing *('alīm)*.
>
> *Qur'ān 2:115; cf. AYA*

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

Allāh (A/P) *Lit.* God; *Allāh* is the creator of the universe in the *Qur'ān,* and is the name given to the one Lord by Muslims of every race and language.

The word *Allāh* predates Islam. Muḥammad's father, for example, was called 'Abd Allāh (servant of God). Neither is the name *Allāh* exclusive to Islam in modern times. It is also the name used for God by Christians in Arabic-speaking countries.

Allāh is derived from *ilāh,* meaning divinity, deity or god. The word *ilāh* is composed of two words: *El,* god to the Amorites (who built the city of Babylon on the Euphrates river in Mesopotamia about 2500 BCE) and *Huwa* (A) or *Hū* (P), generally translated as 'He', meaning the Deity. The combination of the two names *El-Hū* becomes *Ilāh* or *Ilāhu.*

In the religion prevalent in Mecca before the revelations of Muḥammad, the term *ilāh* (god) was used for the many deities worshipped. *Al-Ilāh* (the God) was differentiated from all these lesser deities as being the creator of the universe and ruler over the lesser gods. However, *Allāh,* as revealed to Muḥammad, is God in a purely and even stringently monotheistic sense. He is not the 'Supreme Being' (which implies that there are other beings); rather, He is 'Being' itself.

Islam, with its singular emphasis on monotheism, lays great stress on the uniqueness and the oneness of *Allāh.* Nothing can be compared with Him. There is nothing that bears any resemblance to Him. Certain qualities define His uniqueness: He is *qidam* (existence before anything else was), and He is *baqā'* (existence after all else ceases to be). He is *al-Wāḥid* (the One, the Unique, the Single).

The greatest heresy in Islam is to ascribe any partner to *Allāh.* To intimate that there is any other being with whom He may be associated or compared strikes at the root of monotheism. Therefore, to the Muslim, the dualism of Zoroastrianism and the trinitarianism of Christianity represent polytheism. To the mystics and philosophers of Islam, the process by which *Allāh* creates the creation is emanation *(fayḍ).* He emanates from His Essence *(al-Dhāt)* outward and downward into the creation. As His emanation descends *(tanazzul)* through the successive planes of consciousness that comprise the creation, He 'entifies *(ta'ayyun)*', on each plane of consciousness. There is no entity other than He. Thus, the Muslim mystic holds firmly to the understanding that there is no reality other than the one God. He is *al-Aḥad,* the One, the Unity that is all-encompassing and absolute.

Islam has many descriptive names of God. Collectively, they are called *al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná* (the Most Beautiful Names), of which there are said to be ninety-nine, the one hundredth being that of *Allāh. Allāh* is held by Islam to be more than a mere word; it is regarded by some as the actual and true Name of God. For the Muslim theologian, the combination of letters making up the word *Allāh* is seen as being highly sacred and directly associated with God Himself. Many mystics, however, have said that no spoken or written word can ever truly name God. Every spoken and written word is liable to change over the course of time. Although the creative Power of God is often

called 'God's Name', it is a divine reality to be experienced through mystic practice, not a written or spoken word or name. It can only be experienced by spiritual faculties of perception *(ḥawāss-i dil)* that are different from the five physical senses that hear or see all spoken and written words.

The *Qur'ān* contains many beautiful and inspiring passages in praise of *Allāh:*

> God! *(Allāh!)* There is no god *(ilāha)* but He,
> the Living, the Everlasting.
> Slumber seizes Him not, neither sleep;
> To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth.
> Who is there that shall intercede with Him,
> save by His leave?
> He knows what lies before them and what is after them,
> And they comprehend not anything of His knowledge
> save such as He wills.
> His throne comprises the heavens and earth;
> The preserving of them oppresses Him not;
> He is the All-High, the All-Glorious.
>
> *Qur'ān 2:255, KI*

> He is *Allāh:*
> there is no god *(ilāha)* but He.
> He is the Knower of the Unseen and the Seen;
> He is the Compassionate *(al-Raḥmān)*, the Merciful *(al-Raḥīm)*.
>
> He is *Allāh:*
> there is no god *(ilāha)* but He.
> He is the Sovereign, the Holy One,
> the Source of Peace *(al-Salām)*,
> the Faithful, the Guardian,
> the Almighty, the Irresistible, the Sublime.
> Glory be to *Allāh!* (High is He)
> above the partners they associate with Him!
>
> He is *Allāh*, the Creator *(al-Khāliq)*,
> the Originator, the Fashioner.
> To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names *(al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná):*
> All that is in the heavens and on earth
> declares His praises and glory;
> And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.
>
> *Qur'ān 59:22–24*

> It is God *(Allāh)* who splits the grain and the date stone,
> brings forth the living from the dead;
> He brings forth the dead too from the living.
> So that then is God *(Allāh);* then how are you perverted?
> He splits the sky into dawn, and has made the night for a repose,
> and the sun and moon for a reckoning.
> That is the ordaining of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.
> It is He who has appointed for you the stars,
> that by them you might be guided in the shadows of land and sea.
> We have distinguished the signs for a people who know.
> It is He who produced you from one living soul,
> and then a lodging place, and then a repository.
> We have distinguished the signs for a people who understand.
>
> *Qur'ān 6:95–98, KI*

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

Allāh, ninety-nine names of See **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

Allāhu Ta'ālá (A), **Allāh Ta'ālá** (P) *Lit.* God *(Allāh)* Most High *(Ta'ālá)*, the traditional form used when quoting from the *Qur'ān* being "*Qāla Allāhu Ta'ālá* ... (God Most High said ...)".

The *Qur'ān* refers to *Allāh* as *subḥānahu wa-ta'ālá:* "glorified and exalted be He" or "glory be to Him, be He exalted":[1]

> The commandment of *Allāh* will come to pass,
> so seek you not to hasten it.
> Glorified and exalted be He *(subḥānahu wa-ta'ālá)*,
> above all that they associate (with Him).
>
> *Qur'ān 16:1; cf. MGK*

To associate anything with *Allāh* is considered a great heresy in Islam. *Allāh* is regarded as the one and only, having no 'partners' or 'associates'.

See also: **al-'Alī**, **Allāh**.

1. *Qur'ān* 30:39, 6:100, 16:1.

amar(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* without *(a)* death *(mara);* not subject to death; deathless, immortal; an inherent quality of the Lord, the eternal realm, the creative Power and the soul.

See also: **amar** (5.1), **amar lok**.

amar(a) lok(a), **amar(a) pad(a)**, **amar(a) pur(a)** (S/H/Pu), **amar dhām** (H/Pu), **amar(ā) pur** (Pu) *Lit.* deathless *(amar)* or immortal region *(lok);* immortal place, state, status or condition *(pad);* immortal city, abode or kingdom *(pur);* immortal home or dwelling *(dhām).* In Indian mythology, *amaraloka, amarapura* and *amarapada* are used for *svarga,* the dwelling or paradise of the gods; in Hindi and Punjabi, the terms refer to the divine eternity.

Many mystics have said that the essential nature of the soul is the immortality of God. Thus, the soul will only feel at home or completely at peace when it reaches its true dwelling place with God:

> Kabīr, just as thou rememberest God when necessity arises,
> so should thou remember Him always.
> Thiswise, thou shalt abide in the immortal city *(amarā pur),*
> and God shall restore thee the wealth that thou hast lost.
>
> *Kabīr, Ādi Granth 1373, MMS*

> With steadfast attention, realize the true Word *(sat Shabd),*
> and attain the status of a *haṃsa* (*lit.* swan, a pure soul).
> Such a devotee reaches the immortal abode *(amar lok),*
> and sees there mysterious and wondrous sights.
>
> *Dariyā Sāhib, Dariyā Sāgar, Chaupaī 128–29, DG2 p.13; cf. DSSB p.176*

> Going further, cross the imperceptible *(alakh)*
> and the inaccessible *(agam)* region.
> Then you will find the immortal home *(amar dhām)*
> of the Lord of the Soul *(Rādhā Swāmī).*
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 20:28.11–12, SBP p.169*

> Through the true Name, he practises truth,
> and sings the *Guru*'s holy true Word *(Bāṇī)*
> and the Lord's praises.
> When, even while abiding in his own home,
> the mortal obtains the immortal status *(amar pad),*
> then alone is he blest with glory in the true court.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1342 , MMS*

amūrt(a) (S/H) *Lit.* without *(a)* form *(mūrta);* formless; hence, incorporeal, unembodied, abstract, subtle, intangible; used in the *Upanishads* for the indestructible aspect of *Brahman* or true Being *(Purusha):*

> Verily, there are two forms of *Brahman:*
> the formed and the formless *(amūrta),*
> the mortal and the immortal,
> the finite and the infinite,
> the perceptible and the imperceptible.
>
> *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 2:3.1*

And:

> He is the self-luminous, formless *(amūrta)* Being *(Purusha),*
> uncreated, and existing both within and without.
>
> *Muṇḍaka Upanishad 2:1.2, U1 p.280*

anādi (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* without *(an)* beginning *(ādi);* having no beginning, beginningless; hence, eternal, unborn, uncaused; descriptive of God:

> Being without beginning *(anādi),*
> and without attributes *(nirguṇa),*
> the supreme Self *(Paramātmā),*
> though dwelling in the body (as the soul),
> remains actionless and untouched (by action).
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 13:31*

And:

> He is primal, pure, sans beginning *(anādi),* indestructible,
> and of the same one vesture all the ages through.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 7, MMS*

anaghra raochah (Pv) *Lit.* boundless *(anaghra)* light *(raochah);* heavens of endless light, in the Pahlavi literature of Zoroastrianism; equivalent to the earlier Avestan term, *garō demāna* (house of heavenly song) of Zarathushtra's *Gāthās.*

See also: **garō demāna**.

Anāmī, Anām (H/Pu), **Anāmī Purush** (H) *Lit.* without *(a)* name *(nām);* hence, nameless *(anāmī, anām)* or unnamable, used mystically as descriptive of God; also, the nameless One *(Anāmī)* and the nameless *(Anāmī)* Being *(Purush),* the supreme Lord, the lord of the highest spiritual region, as described by a number of Indian Saints.

God is beyond and something altogether other than the many names given to Him by man, according to language and culture. The Reality which these names depict has no name. He is called the Nameless, He who has no name, because His oneness is beyond thought and speech, and hence He cannot be named. Since names only arise when there is a division into the namer and the one named, He is unnamable:

> Of *Swāmī*, the origin of all,
> I will now sing.
> Indescribable, unfathomable, infinite
> and nameless *(anāmī)* is He.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 23:1.28, SBP p.198*

And:

> Incomprehensible, desireless,
> nameless *(anām)*, formless,
> indivisible and incomparable:
> He can only be realized through inner experience.
> *Tulsīdās, Rām Charit Mānas 7:110.2, RCM p.1146*

More specifically, *Anāmī* and *Anāmī Purush* have been used for the highest of the four phases or aspects of the Godhead, as described by some Indian Saints. From the highest, these have been called *Anāmī, agam lok* (inaccessible region), *alakh lok* (imperceptible region) and *sat lok* (true region), each having a 'ruling lord' known respectively as *Anāmī Purush, Agam Purush, Alakh Purush* and *Sat Purush.* The concept of the supreme oneness of God having 'aspects' or seeming 'divisions' or *lokas* (regions), together with their ruling beings, is only an attempt to describe the essentially indescribable. They are all one indivisible Godhead or grand realm of eternity.

Anāmī, agam lok and *alakh lok* represent the final experiences of the soul in its journey to union with the Almighty. Once united with Him the drop has joined the Ocean. These 'regions' are not qualitatively different in the way that other realms of creation differ from each other. If there is a difference, it is only that of the purity of the soul as it moves 'forward', merging more completely into the supreme Source of all.

In these regions, the soul, now one with the omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence of the Almighty, has no further need of the various faculties it required in the creation for experiencing that which was apparently other than itself. It is now one with the Creator of everything it ever sought. It is immortal, swimming in the bliss *(ānand)* of its final home, and with its Father of fathers, *Anāmī Purush.*

Anāmī and *Anāmī Purush* have been used as names for the supreme Lord

by Indian mystics such as Kabīr, Tulsī Sāhib and Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh. Speaking in the name of God, the latter says:

I am the nameless One *(Anāmī)*,
utterly inaccessible and beyond illusion *(māyā)*.
In my own sweet will,
I remain absorbed in the highest region.
First, I took on the form of the Inaccessible *(Agam)*.
Second, I assumed another form,
as the imperceptible Being *(Alakh Purush)*.
Third, I manifested myself
as the true Being *(Sat Purush)*,
and I myself gave rise to *sat lok*.
In these three (realms) my own form prevails.

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 26:1.17, 19–21, SBP pp.215–16

Similarly, Kabīr describes the regions and rulers beyond *Sat Purush:*

Next is the imperceptible region *(alakh lok)*, O brother,
where the imperceptible Lord *(Alakh Purush)* reigns.
Billions of suns pale into insignificance
beside the brilliance of a single pore (of His body):
Such is the imperceptible One *(Alakh)* I behold.
Above that is the grand inaccessible palace *(agam mahal)*,
where the inaccessible Lord *(Agam Purush)* reigns supreme.
Trillions of suns are put to shame
by the brilliance of a single pore (of His body):
Such is the boundless glory
of the inaccessible Infinite *(Agam Purush)*.
Beyond that is the indescribable realm *(akah lok)*, O brother,
where the nameless Being *(Anāmī Purush)* resides.
But only he can know it, who reaches there,
for He is beyond all words and description.

Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 1, Shabd 22:27–29, KSS1 p.67

See also: **Rādhā Swāmī**.

anāmī dhām (H/Pu) *Lit.* nameless *(anāmī)* abode *(dhām);* the highest spiritual region; the Source of all. When something has a name, it means that there is division: the one named and the one giving the name. The Lord is one and beyond all division. Hence, He has been called the nameless One or *Anāmī*, and His 'region' has sometimes been referred to as *anāmī dhām*.

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh compares the soul to the *Alalpachch,* a mythical bird that emerges from the egg in midair, taking flight without ever touching the ground:

> Like the *Alalpachch,* the soul returns to the heavens:
> dear to me is my beloved Lord of the Soul *(Rādhā Swāmī).*
> Thus it reaches its own nameless abode *(anāmī dhām):*
> dear to me is my Beloved Lord of the Soul *(Rādhā Swāmī).*
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 3:1.15–16, SBP p.9*

See also: **dhām**.

Anāmī Rūp (H/Pu) *Lit.* the Nameless *(Anāmī)* Being *(Rūp);* an expression equivalent to *Anāmī Purush* (nameless Being or Lord), *rūp* in this context denoting 'being' or 'that which exists by itself'.

anant(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* without *(an)* end *(ant);* endless, limitless, infinite, boundless, countless; used to describe both the divine infinitude as well as the immensity and multiplicity of creation:

> *(Brahman* is) without doubt endless *(ananta),*
> beyond reason and analogy,
> beyond all proofs and causeless;
> Knowing which the wise one becomes free.
>
> *Amṛita Bindu Upanishad 9, MUM p.21*

> Salutations to You, O All in all:
> I bow to You from in front,
> from behind and from all sides.
> O boundless *(anant)* in power, O immeasurable in might,
> You pervade everything,
> and, therefore, You indeed are the All.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 11:40; cf. BGT*

And:

> Countless *(anant)* are His forms,
> numerous His names.
> Innumerable are His marvels,
> and diverse His manifestations.
>
> *Sahajobāī, Bānī, Nirguṇ Saguṇ 8, SBB p.39*

Ananta is also an epithet of the god *Vishṇu,* as well as a name given to *Shesha Nāga,* the cosmic serpent regarded as a symbol of eternity, and who – together with *Vishṇu* – existed in the eternity before creation. *Shesha Nāga* is represented in Hindu mythology as floating on the primeval waters, forming a couch for *Vishṇu* from its coils, with its thousand heads as a canopy.

See also: **eternal realm**, **Shesha Nāga** (4.2).

Anokhi (He) *Lit.* I; an emphatic and declarative form of the personal pronoun 'I'; used primarily in the Bible, when God 'speaks' to the people of Israel. The rabbis in the post-biblical and medieval periods asked themselves why God used *Anokhi* when speaking of Himself, rather than the usual form *ani* (I).

The *Zohar* says that there are a number of reasons: "This *Anokhi* contains many mysteries." Most significantly, it was the Lord's first commandment or expression when He gave the *Torah* (Law) to the Israelites on Mount Sinai. According to the *Zohar, Anokhi* is thus the root of the divine principle embodied in the statement, "I am the Lord thy God":[1]

> When the Holy One gave Israel the *Torah* on Mount Sinai, His first word was "*Anokhi* (I)". This *'Anokhi'* contains many mysteries; here, however, we are concerned with the fact that it is the first of all commandments, the root of all precepts of the Law: "I am the Lord." This is the general axiom. The particular is "thy God". The same is true of "The Lord thy God is a consuming fire."[2]
>
> *Zohar 25a, Ra'aya Meheimna, ZSS3 pp.84–85, JCL*

The rabbis observed that the biblical use of *Anokhi* generally refers to His active presence, to God-in-action, rather than to the transcendent Godhead. In *Exodus,* for instance, He is the one who liberates the Israelites from Egypt:

> And God spoke all these words, saying,
> "I *(Anokhi)* am the Lord your God,
> who have brought you out of the land of Egypt,
> out of the house of slavery.
> You shall have no other gods before me."
>
> *Exodus 20:1–3, JCL*

Likewise, it is His activity in creation that is responsible for the incessant motion characterizing physical existence:

> "And I *(Anokhi)* am the Lord your God,
> who stirs up the sea, whose waves roar;

The Lord of Hosts is His name."

Isaiah 51:15, JCL

The rabbis portrayed this active, manifest, protecting and indwelling presence of God permeating creation as a feminine persona, which they called the *Shekhinah* (*lit.* that which dwells). Thus when God refers to Himself as *Anokhi*, they took it to mean the *Shekhinah:*

> And Jacob awakened out of his sleep, and he said: "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." How, we may ask, could he have known? The truth is, however, that he meant much the same as Saul when he said: "And I have not entreated the Presence of the Lord."[3] What Jacob really said was: "And I have not known *Anokhi* (I, *i.e.* the *Shekhinah*)"; as much as to say: "Behold all this revelation has been vouchsafed to me whilst yet I have not reached the stage of a knowledge of *Anokhi* ('I') and of entering under the wings of the *Shekhinah*, so as to attain perfection." …
>
> Hence Jacob said: "Have I seen all this without knowing *Anokhi?*", because he was single, and had not yet come under the wings of the *Shekhinah*.
>
> *Zohar 1:150a–b, ZSS2 pp.81–82, JCL*

1. *Exodus* 20:2.
2. *Deuteronomy* 4:24.
3. *1 Samuel* 13:12.

antaryāmī (S/H), **antarjāmī** (H/Pu) *Lit.* inner *(antar)* controller or regulator *(jāmī);* thus, inner pervader or knower; the knower within; one who knows what is going on within another person; one who knows the secrets of the heart; hence, God who dwells within and knows everything. Often translated as omniscient or all-knowing, *antaryāmī* refers to the Lord's omniscience of the individual rather than the entire creation. Like a number of Indian epithets of God, *antaryāmī* is used as an adjective as well as a noun. In the *Upanishads, antaryāmī* refers to *Brahman:*

> He *(Brahman)* is the unseen Seer,
> the unheard Hearer,
> the unconceived Conceiver,
> the unknown Knower.
>
> There is no other seer than He;
> There is no other hearer than He;

There is no other conceiver than He;
There is no other knower than He.

He is your Self,
the knower within *(antaryāmī)*, the Immortal.
All else but Him is perishable.
Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 3:7.23

And:

He who knows that inner link *(sūtra)*, O Kāpya,
and that knower within *(antaryāmī)*:
He indeed is a knower of *Brahman*.
He is a knower of the worlds (creation),
a knower of the gods, a knower of the *Vedas;*
He is a knower of beings, a knower of the self,
a knower of all things.
Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 3:7.1

In the mystic literature of the Indian Saints, *antarjāmī* is generally used in reference to God, the *Guru* or highly evolved souls:

I am ignorant, You are all-knowing;
You are the knower of the inner secrets *(antarjāmī)* of all hearts.
Sahajobāī, Bānī, Rāg Rāmkalī 3, SBB p.57

The inner knower *(antarjāmī)* understands all the plans:
what can be kept concealed from Him?
Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1000, MMS

Anu (Su) The father of the gods in Sumerian and later Mesopotamian cultures, dating back to the third and fourth millennia BCE. Embedded in the extensive Mesopotamian mythology are indications that a mystic understanding was not far away, and traces are found there of universal mystic teachings. For the Sumerians, the father of the gods was *Anu,* the first-born of the primeval Sea.

See also: **Enki**, **Enlil** (3.1).

anupam(a) (S/H), **anūp** (H/Pu) *Lit.* without *(an)* parallel *(upamā);* unique, having nothing of a similar kind, incomparable, unparalleled, peerless,

matchless, inimitable; hence, descriptive of God, the creative Power, a Master or anything divine:

> You are the imperishable, immortal,
> established and changeless Being,
> without attributes, colour or form, fully awakened,
> existence, consciousness and bliss intensified.
> You are immutable, infinitely lustrous and unmodified.
> Unparalleled *(anūp)* are You, unborn, omniscient and infinite,
> undifferentiated, imperceptible, ever abiding, and self-activated.
>
> *Ravidās, Vāṇī 177:1–4, SGRV p.139*

And:

> Because of God alone, I, the unlovable, have become lovable:
> I have sung the glory of the incomparable *(anupam)* Name.
>
> *Ravidās, Vāṇī 83:2, SGRV p.103*

apār(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* without *(a)* boundary *(pār);* boundless, endless, limitless, infinite; hence, uncrossable, beyond reach, beyond limit, difficult to surmount; unknowable; descriptive of God and the *Guru:*

> Lofty, grand and infinite *(apār)* is my Lord,
> and beyond reach is His court.
> It is through the Name *(Nām),*
> that one is blessed with glorification and magnificence:
> O much beloved is the Lord unto Nānak.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1003, MMS*

Apār also appears in combination with *apar* (without a second, unequalled). *Apar apār* means infinite:

> Infinite *(apar apār),* boundless, inaccessible and inapprehensible
> is the Lord, and His worth cannot be ascertained by speaking.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 634, MMS*

The term is also used in descriptions of both the creative Power and the *Satguru* (true Master).

aparampār (H), **aparaṃpar** (Pu) *Lit.* having nothing beyond *(apar)* + boundless *(apār);* a superlative of *apār;* far beyond the furthest extent, past the

uttermost limit, beyond the furthest shore, utterly boundless, completely beyond all measure of time and space, illimitable, limitless; hence, infinite; descriptive of God, the Creative Word and the *Guru:*

> He who knows Him – he alone knows Him!
> Such is the merciful Lord.
> Beyond limit *(apār)* is the limitless *(aparampār)* Lord!
> Who can describe Him?
>
> *Jagjīvan Sāhib, Bānī 2, Upadesh 28.3, JSB2 p.21*

And:

> The glory of the omnipotent and bright *Guru* cannot be described:
> The *Guru* is himself the limitless *(aparaṃpar),*
> invisible and inscrutable Lord-Master *(pārbrahm Parmeshwar).*
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 522, MMS*

Arikh Anpin (Am) See **erekh apayim**.

'arsh, al- (A/P) (pl. *'urūsh, a'rāsh) Lit.* the sky, the heaven, the empyrean; also, throne, specifically the throne of God. In traditional Islamic cosmology, the highest of the nine heavens, the starless heaven forming the backdrop to the fixed physical stars, is regarded as the throne *(al-'arsh)* of God. The fixed stars, comprising the eighth heaven, are called His footstool *(al-kursī).* The belief in these nine heavens has its origins in the Greek conception of the celestial bodies revolving in fixed, crystalline spheres around the earth. In early Christianity, too, God and His angels were believed to dwell in the 'empyrean' – the highest part of the supposedly spherical heavens in a geocentric universe.

In Sufi understanding, the throne, the footstool and the heavens were understood to lie within the sphere of consciousness. Hence, Rūmī says that the aspiring soul seeks to go beyond the "seven heavens" and the "empyrean". He is speaking of the soul's inner union with the Divine:

> Are not the seven heavens *(haft āsmān)*
> below the empyrean *('arsh)?*
> Beyond the empyrean *('arsh)* is our revolution.
> What place here for aspirations
> towards the empyrean *('arsh)* and the sky?
> Our journey is to the rose garden of union.
>
> *Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz; cf. KST p.104; SDST (II) pp.10–11*

The term *'arsh* has been variously used by different Sufi writers for different inner heavens. The same applies to the term *kursī* (footstool, but also throne). Sufi scholar, R.A. Nicholson, for example, says that Sufis identify *al-'arsh* with the divine consciousness wherein the potentialities of all things are latent.[1] That is, *al-'arsh* is the reality of which the outer physical world is a manifestation; this world is governed from that throne.

Likewise, in Christian, Jewish and other Middle Eastern traditions, terms for 'throne' have been applied to many of the inner heavens, from just above the physical up to the level of God Himself. A throne is essentially a seat of power, and this is applicable to many levels within the hierarchy of creation.

Such terms are a part of a family of metaphors derived from the characteristic style of government in the ancient Middle East – kings and kingdoms. Middle Eastern mystics have often spoken of both God and the spiritual Master as the King. His place of eternal residence and His seat of power have hence been called His throne:

> *Allāh* is He who raised the heavens
> without any pillars that you can see;
> Then He established Himself
> on the throne *(al-'arsh)* (of authority);
> He has subjected the sun and the moon (to His law)!
> Each one runs (its course) for a term appointed.
> He doth regulate all affairs,
> explaining the signs in detail,
> that you may believe with certainty
> in the meeting with your Lord.
>
> *Qur'ān 13:2; cf. AYA*

And:

> Therefore, exalted be *Allāh,* the King, the Reality:
> There is no god but He,
> the Lord of the throne *(al-'arsh)* of honour.
>
> *Qur'ān 23:116, AYA*

But this throne is within. Just as the outer, physical eyes see the physical sky, Sufis explain that it is the inner faculty of vision, the "heart", which sees the throne or empyrean of God:

> During the sway of the sun and moon it (the physical eye) sees the sky, whereas the heart *(dil)* sees the empyrean *('arsh)* by the light of knowledge and unification and love and, while still in this world, explores the world to come.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb III, KM p.33*

Indeed, Ibn 'Arabī describes an inner vision of the throne of God:

> I saw the throne *(al-'arsh)* of God as though supported on numberless pillars of light, all of which flashed like lightning. Despite this I could see that it had a deep shadow in which there was an unimaginable peace. This shadow was that of the concavity of the throne, veiling the light of Him who sat upon it, the Merciful.
>
> *Ibn 'Arabī, Meccan Revelations 2, FMA p.260, in SOA p.34*

Sufis speak of the heavens as the degrees of being separating man from God. Ḥāfiẓ writes that although apparently caged in the body, the true dwelling place of his soul (his "heart") is in *'arsh,* the ninth and highest heaven. He compares his soul to the fabulous *humā* bird who never lands, and who brings good fortune to all upon whom her shadow falls. Here, the *humā* bird symbolizes the spiritual Master who has the power to take souls to the highest heaven:

> The bird of my heart is a holy bird:
> Its nest is the ninth heaven *('arsh),*
> weary of the cage of the body,
> sated with the world.
>
> When the bird of the soul flies away
> from this dust heap,
> then once again will it make its nest there.
>
> When the bird of the heart flies away,
> its dwelling will be on the *Sidrah* (Lote Tree);
> Know the pinnacle of the ninth heaven *('arsh)*
> to be the nesting place of our falcon.
>
> The shadow of destiny falls upon the head of all the world;
> But if our bird should spread her wings and feathers
> over one in this world –
> Then not in the two worlds will he make his dwelling,
> but above the ninth heaven *('arsh).*
>
> *Gnosis* is her source:
> no-place *(lā-makān)* is her place *(makān).*
> The place of splendour of our bird is the highest world;
> Its watering and feeding place, the rose garden of the Beloved.
>
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHM (465:1–6) pp.418–19, DIH pp.349–50; cf. DHWC (465:1–6) p.772*

Using one of his commonest images, drinking the wine of divine love and ecstasy, Ḥāfiẓ also talks of reaching "union with the Beloved" so that the soul may hear the "Voice", the divine Music, from the "ninth heaven":

> Drink wine: and reach a resolution
> of union with the Beloved;
> And hear the Voice *(Sukhun)* that calls out to you
> from the roof of the ninth heaven *('arsh).*
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHM (287:13) p.280, DIH p.234; cf. DHWC (294:12) p.513*

But he adds in another ode:

> Only if you leave your self
> can you go above the pillarless roof of nine vaults.
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān; cf. DHWC (686:88) p.988*

Because, mystically, God's throne is to be found within, Sufis also speak of the human heart *(qalb)* itself as being God's throne, where He dwells within every human being:

> The heart is His throne *(al-'arsh)* and (is) not delimited by any specific attribute. On the contrary, it brings together all the divine Names and Attributes, just as the All-Merciful possesses all the Most Beautiful Names.[2]
> *Ibn 'Arabī, Meccan Revelations 3:129.7, in SPK p.107*

In fact, Rūmī says that a heart filled with awe and love of God is so Godlike that it can be said to be greater than His throne. Though the mystic throne of God represents something infinitely beyond the visible – yet it is contained in the hearts of God's lovers:

> Whatever makes you tremble –
> know that you are worth just that!
> That is why the lover's heart
> is greater than God's throne *('arsh).*
> *Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz 609:6400, KSD2 p.46, KDS1 p.262, in SPL p.212*

But at best, words are greatly limited, and Ibn 'Arabī writes that however things get described, the truth is that "there is nothing other than God":

> A throne *(al-'arsh),* a footstool *(al-kursī),* celestial spheres, angels, elements … But there is nothing other than God.
> *Ibn 'Arabī, Meccan Revelations 2:151.3, in SPK p.93*

See also: **āftāb** (4.1), **'ālam** (4.1), **al-kursī** (4.1), **takht**, **throne**.

1. R.A. Nicholson, *Commentary on Maśnavī* II:1102, *MJR7* p.280.
2. *Qur'ān* 17:110.

'arsh al-'aẓīm, al- (A), **'arsh-i 'aẓīm** (P) *Lit.* the great *('aẓīm)* throne *('arsh)*; the great sky, the great heaven. The *Qur'ān* refers to the *'arsh al-'aẓīm* as the highest 'seat' of *Allāh:*

> But if they turn away, say:
> "*Allāh* suffices me:
> There is no God but He: on Him is my trust –
> He the Lord of the throne (of glory) supreme *(al-'arsh al-'aẓīm)!*"
> *Qur'ān 9:129; cf. AYA*

> Say, "who is the Lord of the seven heavens,
> and the Lord *(Rabb)* of the throne (of glory) supreme *(al-'arsh al-'aẓīm)*".
> *Qur'ān 23:86, AYA*

In Sufi literature, *al-'arsh al-'aẓīm* refers to one or other of the lower heavens in the creative hierarchy. Thus, in some instances, *al-'arsh al-'aẓīm* is the sky of *'ālam al-jabarūt*, while *al-'arsh* is the sky of *'ālam al-malakūt*. Similarly, *al-kursī* (the footstool) marks the top of the physical plane. But like a number of terms for the various regions, it has been used variously by different writers.

See also: **al-'arsh**, **al-kursī** (4.1), **takht**, **throne**.

'arsh al-mu'allá, al- (A), **'arsh-i mu'allá** (P) *Lit.* the raised up *(mu'allá)* throne *('arsh)*; the exalted throne; the raised-up sky, the superior sky, glorified sky, the great heaven; either the heaven of eternity or one of the lower heavens, depending upon the context; equivalent to *al-'arsh al-'aẓīm*.

See also: **al-'arsh al-'aẓīm**.

arūp(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* without *(a)* form *(rūp)*; formless, incorporeal; used for aspects of the inner realms and realities beyond the gross forms of the physical universe, though the term is only truly applicable to the Supreme Being:

> He from whom the entire world has taken form *(sarūp)* –
> His true self is formless *(arūp)* and imperishable.
> *Kabīr, Akhrāvatī, Chaupaī 39:1, KSA pp.22*

Since the soul, the *ātman*, the eternal essence within all beings, is one with the Supreme Being, it too has the qualities of the Supreme and is essentially formless:

> He who has realized that which is without sound, without touch,
> without form *(arūpa)*, imperishable,
> and likewise without taste or smell, eternal,
> without beginning or end,
> even beyond the *mahat* (cosmic mind), immutable –
> He is freed from the jaws of death.
>
> *Kaṭha Upanishad 1:3.15*

āshcharya (S) *Lit.* wonder, marvel, astonishment, surprise; used descriptively of God in the sense that He is incomprehensible to human understanding, both in His supreme oneness and in the multiplicity by which he manifests in creation. Thus, the *Bhagavad Gītā* describes the supreme Self as "a wonder *(āshcharyavat)*":

> Some see Him as a wonder *(āshcharyavat);*
> Another speaks of Him as a wonder *(āshcharyavat);*
> Yet another hears of Him as a wonder *(āshcharyavat).*
> But no one knows Him at all,
> though they may (see and speak and) hear (of Him).
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 2:29; cf. BGT*

The adjectival form in Hindi and Punjabi is *āshcharj* or *acharj,* sometimes used as a noun. Thus, Guru Arjun describes the Lord:

> Undeceivable, unpierceable and infinite is my Lord,
> and supremely high is His form.
> Contemplating and reflecting
> over the embodiment of wonder *(acharj)* and beauty,
> His slaves make merry.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 677, MMS*

Asmā' al-Ḥusná, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Most Beautiful *(al-Ḥusná)* Names *(Asmā');* the names given to *Allāh* in the various lists of His ninety-nine names, collectively called the Most Beautiful Names. The expression comes from the *Qur'ān:*

> The Most Beautiful Names *(al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná)* belong to *Allāh:*
> so call on Him by them;

But shun such men as use profanity in His names:
For what they do, they will soon be requited.

Qur'ān 7:180, AYA

He is *Allāh,* the Creator, the Originator, the Fashioner.
To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names *(al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná):*
All that is in the heavens and on earth
  declares His praises and glory;
And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.

Qur'ān 59:24; cf. AYA, MGK

The 'Most Beautiful Names' are divided into *Asmā' al-Dhāt* (Names of the Essence) and *Asmā' al-Ṣifāt* (Names of the Qualities or Attributes). Muslim theologians consider such names as *al-Ḥayy* (the Living One), *al-'Alīm* (the All-Knowing) and *al-Baṣīr* (the All-Seeing) to be 'Names of Essence'.

The *ṣifātī* (attributive) names are categorized into names of majesty, wrath and power *(asmā' al-jalāl* or *asmā' al-qahrīyah)* and names of beauty, kindness, mercy and grace *(asmā' al-jamāl* or *asmā' al-luṭfīyah).* Thus, many of the divine names are paired with an opposite. He is the Abaser *(al-Khāfiḍ)* and the Exalter *(al-Rāfi');* He is the Afflicter *(al-Ḍārr)* and the Beneficent *(al-Barr);* He is the Postponer *(al-Mu'akhkhir)* and He is also the Promoter and the Expediter *(al-Muqaddim);* He is the Giver of Life *(al-Muḥyī)* and also the Taker of Life *(al-Mumīt).* These pairings of opposite names illustrate the fact that as soon as one tries to name God with the words available in human language, one has named only one side of the boundless unity that is God. They also illustrate that He is the cause behind all causes; there is no force operative in the universe other than He.

Other pairs of divine names further illustrate the fact that He is all in all. He is the Outward, the Manifest *(al-Ẓāhir)* and the Inner, the Hidden *(al-Bāṭin);* He is the First *(al-Awwal)* and the Last *(al-Ākhir).*

There is a traditional saying *(ḥadīth)* that runs: "To *Allāh* belong ninety-nine names."[1] The tradition holds that the one hundredth name is the secret name, and that he who realizes that secret name realizes the kernel of the great mystery. Therefore, lists of these names are always terminated at ninety-nine, and the one hundredth name is generally understood to be *Allāh.* There are, in fact, many more than ninety-nine descriptive names of God used in Islam, and lists of the ninety-nine names vary to some extent. The names consist of those that appear in the *Qur'ān,* those implied by certain passages in the *Qur'ān,* and others from tradition *(ḥadīth).*

The well-known Sufi mystic, Abī Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (*c.*1058–1111 CE) explained the spiritual meaning of these names in his book: *Sharḥ Ma'ānī Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusná (Commentary on the Meanings of Allāh's Most Beautiful Names).* In his list, *Allāh* is the first of the ninety-nine. The following names, with brief explanatory comments, are largely

derived from his list, plus *al-Aḥad,* making ninety-nine. Quranic references in brackets refer either to the use of the name itself, or to an implied use or the use of a grammatical variant of the name:

Al-'Adl	The Just; only those who can see the whole creation can know His justice; the perfect order of His creation is also *'adl* (6:115).
Al-'Afūw	The Pardoner; greater than forgiveness, for He erases imperfections and wipes away sins (4:99).
Al-Aḥad	The One; the One and only Absolute; He who is all and everything, with whom there is nothing to compare (112:1).
Al-Ākhir	The Last, the Final, the End; He to whom everything returns; the final destination of the soul (57:3).
Al-'Alīy	The Most High; He who is the first Cause of everything in creation, and of all thought and action. The scale of loftiness is not in space, but in being (2:255).
Al-'Alīm	The All-Knowing; He who knows everything external and internal, its beginning and its end (2:29).
Al-Awwal	The Primordial, the First, the Beginning; He from whom all else derives its existence (57:3).
Al-'Aẓīm	The Magnificent, the Great; *al-'Aẓīm al-Muṭlaq* is He whose greatness is beyond sight and imagination (2:255).
Al-'Azīz	The Mighty, the Exalted in Might, the Almighty; He who is exalted in power, rank and dignity, full of might and majesty, able to enforce His will (22:40). *'Azīz* also means loved or dear, hence precious.
Al-Badī'	The Originator, the Creator; He who has brought everything into existence (2:117).
Al-Bā'ith	The Resurrector, the Raiser; He who bestows a second new life; the transformer from ignorance and death to understanding and a joyous life (16:89).
Al-Bāqī	The Everlasting, the Eternal, the Permanent, the Enduring; He who knows the future; He who endures forever (20:73).
Al-Bāri'	The Originator, the Inventor and Producer of the creation, the Shaper out of naught, the Evolver (59:24).
Al-Barr	The Beneficent, the Benevolent (52:28).
Al-Baṣīr	The All-Seeing; He who sees the whole creation, within and without; yet, unlike the human mind, He is free from the imprint of images and colours (57:4).
Al-Bāsiṭ	The Expander, the Distributor (of alms); also, He who brings souls to their bodies at the beginning of life; the Releaser of hearts; He who lifts worry and depression (13:26).
Al-Bāṭin	The Inner, the Hidden; that which is seen with the eye of the soul (57:3).

Al-Ḍārr The Harmful; The Afflicter; He who is harmful, injurious or evil; He may use intermediaries for this activity (48:11).

Al-Fattāḥ The Enlightener, the Opener; He who inspires; He who grants victory; He with whose grace every closed door is opened, and with whose guidance every problem is solved; He who opens His doors to His devotees (34:26).

Al-Ghaffār The Forgiver; He who exposes human beauty and hides human ugliness; He who cloaks human weaknesses in this world and forgives them in the hereafter; He who hides human frailty and imperfection from the eyes of the world (2:235).

Al-Ghafūr The Forgiving; He who gives perfect and total forgiveness; He who forgives continually, again and again (2:173).

Al-Ghanī The Rich; He who is free of all wants; He who is not attached to anyone; the devotee is *ghanī* if he needs only the Lord (2:267).

Al-Hādī The Guide; He who guides devotees to Himself; He is the *hādī* to the chick in picking its seed, to the bees in building their architectural masterpiece; the examples of such guidance in life and nature are endless; in the *Qur'ān* as *al-Hādi* (22:54).

Al-Ḥafīẓ The Preserver, the Guardian; He who preserves and maintains all things according to their ordained roles in creation, from the motion of an atom to the stars in the heavens, from the wetness of water to the complexities of biological processes (34:21).

Al-Ḥakam The Judge, the Arbiter; He from whose judgment there is no appeal; He from whose justice arises all destiny (40:48).

Al-Ḥakīm The Wise; He who knows the highest – the most permanent and everlasting – kind of knowledge and science (6:18).

Al-Ḥalīm The Patient, the Kindly; He who forbears, who sees sin and wrongdoing without becoming angry and vengeful (2:235).

Al-Ḥamīd The Praiseworthy (for His perfection), the Praised; He to whom – because of His perfection – all praise is due (22:64).

Al-Ḥaqq The Truth, the Real; since only the eternal and imperishable is real (20:114).

Al-Ḥasīb The Accounter, the Reckoner, the Provider of sufficiency; the Fulfiller of all needs. For the infant, He provides the mother's milk, her love for the child, as well as guidance to seek her breast. For the devotee, the Lord alone is his *ḥasīb*. The devotee cares not for heaven, nor is he distracted by hell; he is solely preoccupied with Him, because He is his provider and sustainer (4:6).

Al-Ḥayy The Living One, the All-Conscious and the All-Capable (20:111).

Al-Jabbār The Irresistible, the Enforcer, the Compeller; He who can

enforce His will on anyone, whose intentions cannot be resisted (59:23).

Al-Jalīl — The Majestic; the comprehensive name for all names that describe His majesty, such as *al-'Azīz, al-Malik, al-Quddūs, al-'Alīm, al-Ghanī, al-Kabīr, al-Qādir* and so on. *Al-Kabīr* refers to His innate perfection, *al-Jalīl* to the perfection of His attributes; *al-'Aẓīm* combines both meanings and is understood by direct inner vision only. He is exceptionally beautiful, and the observer is encompassed with a joy and happiness that far surpasses that of the heavens.

Al-Jāmi' — The Combiner, the Compiler; the Author; He from whom all the processes of creation arise (3:9).

Al-Kabīr — The Grand, the Glorious, the Great. His grandeur emanates from His perfect existence, which has two aspects: one is His everlastingness; *kabīr,* which also means 'old of age', is applicable here. The other is His being the cause and source of all that exists. The *al-Kabīr* of the devotees is the perfect One whose perfection is not confined to Himself but spreads to others so that no one keeps His company without absorbing part of His perfection. He is thus the *Murshid* (Master) for mankind, the One suitable as an example and a light for others (22:62).

Al-Karīm — The Generous, the Magnanimous, the Bountiful, the Noble; He who forgives when He wills, fulfils when He promises, and is bountiful when He gives. He does not approve of requests presented to any other than Himself; He does not fail those who seek His refuge (27:40).

Al-Khabīr — The Knower, the Well-Informed, the Aware; He who knows the secrets of the entire creation. Not one grain moves nor is a soul disturbed or pacified without His knowledge. Similar to the All-Knowing *(al-'Alīm),* but includes hidden knowledge and internal matters (6:18).

Al-Khāfiḍ — The Abaser; He who subjects to suffering those infatuated with sensual pleasures; an implied name.

Al-Khāliq — The Creator, the Designer, the Planner, the Architect; the Giver of Purpose. *Al-Khāliq, al-Bāri'* and *al-Muṣawwir* are three similar names for the Creator, but with minor differences (13:16).

Al-Laṭīf — The Gentle, the Gracious, the Subtle; He who is kind and gracious; He who cares tenderly for His creation. He cares for the unborn infant in the mother's womb; He endows parents with love for their newborn; infinite examples can be observed in nature. By His kindness, He enables His devotees to find eternal beatitude with only a little effort and in a

short space of time, even in just one lifetime, which is so short when compared to eternity. The devotee can also become an embodiment of this name by gentle example, and by guiding others to God without argument, quarrels or forcefulness (42:19).

Al-Majīd The Glorious; He who is noble in essence, beautiful in His deeds, generous in His gifts; a less intense form of *al-Mājid* (the Noble), combining the meanings of *al-Jalīl*, (the Majestic), *al-Wahhāb* (the Bestower) and *al-Karīm* (the Generous) (11:73).

Al-Mājid The Noble, the Honourable; He who shows infinite kindness and generosity to his creatures; He who gives human beings the chance to develop true spiritual nobility, then glorifying them for their development, forgiving their sins and giving them the opportunity for salvation (85:15).

Al-Malik The Sovereign, the Lord, the Master; He who is independent of everyone, while all depend on Him for every need (59:23). The devotee becomes a king when he gains control over his soldiers and his subjects. His soldiers are his lusts, his anger and his desires; his subjects are his tongue, his eyes, his hands, and the rest of his senses. If he controls them, and is not in need of anyone, then he is a king in this world. A prince asked a holy man, "Ask of me your needs; make any request of me." The holy man replied, "You ask me this while I have two slaves that are your masters?" The prince asked, "Who are they?" The holy man said, "Attachment and passion; I have conquered them both, while they have conquered you; I own them and they own you."

Al-Māni' The Protector; He who prevents injury, death and destruction; the same as *al-Ḥafīẓ*.

Al-Matīn The Firm; He who is reliable and a source of security (51:58).

Al-Mu'akhkhir The Postponer; He who postpones the retribution due to evildoers until the Day of Reckoning (14:42).

Al-Mubdi' The Originator; He from whom all creation stems; the Source of action and initiative; the Cause of causality; the Primal Cause (85:13).

Al-Mudhill The Humiliator, the Abaser; He who brings disgrace, the greatest humiliation being that of desire (greed, passions, etc.) (3:26).

Al-Mughnī The Enricher; He who gives spiritual riches (9:74); see also *al-Ghanī*.

Al-Muhaymin The Guardian, the Vigilant; He who controls and administers all destinies (59:23).

Al-Muḥṣī The Gatherer, the Counter; He who stores, compiles and organizes all knowledge (19:94).

Al-Muḥyī The Giver of life (30:50).

Al-Mu'īd The Restorer, the Retriever of life or creation; He who brings back to Himself; the Returner. All come from Him and to Him they shall return. He is the restorer and retriever of all things (85:13).

Al-Mu'izz The Ennobler, the Honourer; He who bestows wealth, fame, honour, power and so on. The real *mu'izz* that He bestows is contentment and control over the senses. Eventually, He lifts the veil from man's heart that he may behold His beauty (3:26).

Al-Mujīb The Responsive; the Provider of all necessities. He gives before the call is made, but necessities only, please! He who listens to prayers and grants requests (11:61).

Al-Mu'min The Believer; He who has complete faith in Himself; who is entirely self-subsistent and confident, deferring to no other (59:23).

Al-Mumīt The Slayer; He who takes life (15:23).

Al-Muntaqim The Avenger; the Retributor; notice and warning is first given, then time and opportunity to repent, while punishment is withheld; but finally, severe vengeance is applied; all deeds have their reaction (30:47).

Al-Muqaddim The Advancer, the Expediter, the Promoter, the Bringer Forward; He who pulls souls to Himself; He who draws souls to Himself (50:28).

Al-Muqīt The Sustainer, the Maintainer; the Provider of nourishment to the body, mind and soul; also, the Controller, the Determiner, by His power as well as His knowledge and perception of everything (4:85).

Al-Muqsiṭ The Equitable, the Just; the smallest motive, thought, word and deed are taken into account by God when meting out justice (21:47).

Al-Muqtadir The Omnipotent, the Prevailer; He who is all-capable, whose will prevails (54:42); a stronger version of *al-Qādir.*

Al-Muṣawwir The Organizer, the Fashioner, the Shaper, the Painter, the Decorator; He who determines the relationship of the individual parts to each other (59:24).

Al-Muta'āli The Self-Exalted; He who is naturally the supreme One; who is above all by His essential nature (13:9).

Al-Mutakabbir The Lofty, the Superior, the Superb, the Sublime, the Justly Proud; He who is greater and higher than all (yet He is also the Humble) (59:23).

Al-Nāfi' The Beneficent, the Propitious; the source of goodness; an implied name (48:11).

Al-Nūr The Light, the Giver of light; the Illuminator; He who brings emancipation from darkness and death (24:35).

Al-Qābiḍ	The Collector, the Recipient, the Seizer; the Collector of alms; He who collects souls at their death. Also, the Constrictor; He who confines and captivates hearts (2:245).
Al-Qādir	The Capable, the Competent, the Able; He who has the power to undertake anything He pleases (17:99).
Al-Qahhār	The Irresistible, the Conqueror, the Defeater of Enemies; He who helps the struggling soul to conquer passions and imperfections; also, the Wrathful (13:16).
Al-Qawī	The Strong, the All-Capable (22:40).
Al-Qayyūm	The Self-Subsistent, Self-Subsisting, the Self-Existing; He who is independent, self-supporting and self-sustaining; also, He upon whom all that exists depends for support and subsistence (2:255). The devotee identifies with this name to the extent that he becomes independent of all else except God.
Al-Quddūs	The Holy, the Pure; He who is pure from any description inspired by the senses, or pictured by the imagination, thought or conscience; He who is above any description of perfection (62:1).
Al-Rāfi'	The Exalter; He who raises and honours His devotees (6:83) by drawing them to Himself.
Al-Raḥīm	The Merciful, the Mercy Giver, the Compassionate, referring to God's actual bestowal of mercy on His creation (2:143).
Al-Raḥmān	The Compassionate, the Merciful, referring to God's intrinsically compassionate and forgiving nature (55:1).
Al-Raqīb	The Vigilant; the perpetual witness and guardian (5:117).
Al-Rashīd	The Knowing, the Guide; He who is all-perceptive and unerring (11:87).
Al-Ra'ūf	The Great of Mercy, the Gentle; a stronger version of *al-Raḥīm,* the Merciful (2:143).
Al-Razzāq	The Sustainer, the Provider; He who provides for the needs of the body without and the soul within (51:57). The fruit of His internal sustenance is life everlasting.
Al-Ṣabūr	The Patient, the Forbearing; He who is forbearing and tolerant; He who does not act prematurely (8:46).
Al-Salām	The Peace, the Source of Peace; He from whose perfection emanates peace (59:23).
Al-Ṣamad	The Eternal, the Everlasting; He who is steadfast and dependable, who can be turned to in all need, physical or spiritual (112:2).
Al-Samī'	The Hearer, the Listener; He who listens to all secrets, who hears everything from the scurrying of ants to the calls of His devotees; He who hears without ears (17:1).
Al-Shahīd	The Witness, the Omnipresent; He who observes everything (5:117), since He is the doer of all things.

Al-Shakūr The Grateful, the Thankful, the Appreciator; the love and charity of the devotee who obeys His will is appreciated by God, who forgives him, rewarding him bountifully for his service (64:17).

Al-Tawwāb The Relenting, the Oft-returning, the Acceptor of Repentance; He who continually presents the opportunity for repentance, by persuasion, by warnings, and finally by threats and fear (2:37).

Al-Wadūd The Affectionate, the Loving, the Friend (11:90); He who enjoys serving and helping mankind. A devotee imbued with this divine quality once said, "I wish I could be a bridge over the fire across which men could pass without being burnt." God's love of man is not affected by any affliction or rejection He may receive from them. As Muḥammad said after he had been beaten, his bones broken and his face bloodied: "Lord forgive my people, for they do not know."

Al-Wahhāb The Giver, the Bestower; He who gives without expectation or condition (3:8).

Al-Wāḥid The One, indivisible and unique; He who is like no other (74:11).

Al-Wājid The Fulfiller, the Independent, the Self-Contained, the Resourceful; He who lacks nothing, since all aspects of divinity and perfection are His.

Al-Wakīl The Guardian, the Administrator, the Trustee; He who can be utterly depended upon for the management of life (6:102).

Al-Walīy The Friend, the Beloved, the Champion in adversity; He who is always loyal (2:257).

Al-Wāli The Governor, the Arranger (of the affairs of creation), the Supervisor; He who assumes control over everything (13:11).

Al-Wārith The Inheritor; He who inherits everything when the creation comes to an end (19:40).

Al-Wāsi' The Vast, the All-Encompassing; He who is all-pervasive (2:115).

Al-Ẓāhir The Evident, the Outward, the External, the Manifest; He who is perceptible with the senses, since He is present in every particle of His creation, high or low; He who is the essence of everything in creation (57:3).

Dhū al-Jalāl wa-al-Ikrām Full of majesty and Generosity, the source of all majesty and benevolence (55:27).

Mālik al-mulk The Owner or Possessor *(Mālik)* of the kingdom *(al-mulk);* He who has total power and control over the creation. Though the creation is seemingly diverse, yet it is one united whole, a kingdom (3:26).

Other names also traditionally found in such lists include:

Al-Muʿṭī	The Giver, the Bestower; He who gives everything out of His own storehouse, asking nothing in return; the Sustainer of all things (20:50).
Al-Muzīl	The Separator; He who causes the creation to appear separate from Himself; He who makes one creature separate from another (10:28).
Al-Nāṣir	The Helper; He who is always ready to bestow His grace in many different ways (4:45).

See also: **Allāh**, **asmā'** (2.2), **al-asmā' al-jamāl**, **jalāl**.

1. *Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 8:75.419, *HSB*.

asmā' al-jalāl, al- (A), **asmā'-yi jalāl** (P) *Lit.* the powerful, awesome, majestic *(jalāl)* names *(asmā')* of *Allāh*. The ninety-nine names of *Allāh* are sometimes divided into His beautiful names *(asmā' al-jamāl)* and His majestic names *(asmā' al-jalāl)*. *Allāh* is both: *al-Muḥyī* (He who brings to life) and *al-Mumīt* (He who puts to death); He is the Exalter *(al-Rāfiʿ)* and the Humiliator *(al-Mudhill)*. Included among His awesome names are *al-Jalīl* (the Majestic), *al-Jabbār* (the Irresistible), *al-Khāfiḍ* (the Abaser), *al-Ḍārr* (the Afflicter) and *al-Qahhār* (the Wrathful).

See also: **Allāh**, **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**, **jalāl**.

asmā' al-jamāl, al- (A), **asmā'-yi jamāl** (P) *Lit.* the divine names *(asmā')* of beauty, kindness, gentleness and love *(jamāl)*. The ninety-nine names of *Allāh* are sometimes classified into His names of power, wrath and majesty *(asmā' al-jalāl)* and His names of beauty, kindness and love *(asmā' al-jamāl)*. Examples of the *asmā' al-jamāl* include *al-Barr* (the Beneficent), *al-Raḥmān* (the Compassionate), *al-Raḥīm* (the Merciful), *al-Ra'ūf* (the Great of Mercy), and *al-Nāṣir* (the Helper).

See also: **Allāh**, **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**, **jamāl**.

asmā' al-luṭfīyah (A), **asmā'-yi luṭfīyah** (P) *Lit.* names *(asmā')* of grace *(luṭfīyah)*; names of *Allāh* pertaining to His kindness, beauty and grace; contrasted with those portraying His majesty and wrath *(asmā' al-qahrīyah)*.

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**, **luṭf** (▸2).

asmā' al-qahrīyah (A), **asmā'-yi qahrīyah** (P) *Lit.* names *(asmā')* of wrath *(qahrīyah);* names of *Allāh* pertaining to His majesty and wrath; contrasted with those portraying His kindness, beauty and grace *(asmā' al-luṭfīyah).*

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

asti (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* existent; hence, in Hindi, existence, the present reality; used in reference to God, in the sense that He is the source of all existence. Only He is; only He exists; everything else is His play, His dream, a reflection or illusion of His essential Reality. Guru Nānak uses a verb form of the word:

Neither gods, demons and men,
nor men of miracles *(siddhs),* seekers and earth shall stay.
The Lord alone is *(ast):* who else can there be?
Thou alone art, O Lord! Thou alone art.

Neither the just, nor the generous, nor other men,
nor the seven worlds beneath the earth, shall remain.
The Lord alone is *(ast):* who else can there be?
Thou alone art, O Lord! Thou alone art.

The sustenance is not in the hands of anyone,
hopes of all abide in the one Lord.
The Lord alone is *(ast):* who else can there be?
Thou alone art, O Lord! Thou alone art.

Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 143–44, MMS

Asti is also a name given to one of the six aspects of birth and death associated with six-petalled centre in *aṇḍa.*

See also: **aṇḍa** (4.1).

ātar (Av) *Lit.* fire (as in household fire); energy; used by Zarathushtra to denote a characteristic of both *Ahurā Mazdā,* the supreme Lord, and the divine spark of the soul. If *Ahurā Mazdā* is described as the universal Flame or the divine Fire *(Ātar),* then – following the metaphor through – each soul is a spark *(ātar)* from that flame. In later generations, this fire was symbolized, externalized and worshipped in fire temples, giving rise to the belief among non-Zoroastrians that Zoroastrianism is a religion of fire worshippers. But the mystic nature of this divine Fire can be seen from Zarathushtra's writings:

> O *Ahurā,* we long for Your mighty Fire *(Ātar)*,
> which is an enduring, blazing Flame
> bringing clear guidance and joy to the true believer.
>
> *Zarathushtra, Yasna 34:4, DSZ p.362*

In later Zoroastrianism, *Ātar* is perceived as a son of *Ahurā Mazdā,* and the most active of the *Ameshā Spentās* (personalized aspects of God).

See also: **Ameshā Spentās** (3.1).

'atarah (He) *Lit.* crown, encirclement; used by the medieval Jewish mystics of the Kabbalah. Its meaning is similar to *Keter,* which also means crown.

Keter is the highest *sefirah* (emanation) in the Kabbalah's description of the emanation of the divine will from the transcendent Godhead *(Ayn-Sof,* the Infinite), down through the four successive realms *('olamim)* of decreasing spirituality and increasing matter.

'Atarah was sometimes used as a synonym for *Keter* and sometimes as a reflection of *Keter,* but at a lower spiritual level – vibrating at a lower intensity – in the hierarchy of realms.

The use of *'atarah* in a mystic context originates in the Bible, where, in verb form, it implies the protecting power of God's love and grace with which He encircles or crowns His devotees:

> For Thou, Lord, dost bless the righteous:
> Thou dost encircle him with favour as with a shield.
>
> *Psalm 5:13, KB*

Mystically, God's crowning or encircling of His devotees is the spiritual protection of His grace:

> Bless the Lord, O my soul, …
> who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies.
>
> *Psalm 103:2, 4, KJV*

And similarly:

> What is man, that You are mindful of him?
> And the son of man, that You visit him?
> For You have made him a little lower than the angels,
> and have crowned (encircled) him with glory and honour.
>
> *Psalm 8:5–6, JCL*

Man is even lower than the angels, yet God has "crowned" him with the potential for inner realization.

See also: **Crown**, **kavod**, **Keter**.

athāh (H/Pu) *Lit.* beyond *(a)* depth *(thāh);* having limitless or unfathomable depth; unfathomable; descriptive of God whose spiritual depth cannot be comprehended by the mind:

> The Lord is inaccessible, unfathomable *(athāh),*
> infinite and the remotest of the remote.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 957, MMS*

'Atika Kadisha (Am) *Lit.* the Ancient *('Atika)* Holy One *(Kadisha);* also called *Arikh Anpin* (the Long-faced One, the Long-suffering One, the Compassionate One). *'Atika Kadisha* represents the eternal spiritual realm of divine mercy and forgiveness, and is higher than *Ẓe'ir Anpin* (the Short-faced One, the Impatient One), who represents the lower, impermanent creation.

In the Kabbalist system of the *sefirot* (the divine emanations by which the creation comes into being), two hidden aspects of the Godhead are said to exist before the emanation of the creation. These are *Ayn-Sof* (the Infinite), the primal, transcendent divine Source, and *Keter* (Crown), the first emanation. These two together are called *'Atika Kadisha.*

A third phase of the Godhead is *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom), where the potential for the emanation of the divine Will or Word first expresses itself. It is not considered part of *'Atika Kadisha,* as it is not the concealed, transcendent aspect of the Godhead, but signals the beginning of the creative process. *Ḥokhmah* is also known as *Yesh* (Something).

In the *Zohar,* all three aspects of the Godhead are described – *Ayn-Sof* and *Keter,* which make up the *'Atika Kadisha* – and *Ḥokhmah,* the first emanation from *Keter:*

> This *'Atika Kadisha,* the secret of secrets … is the supreme head of the upper worlds, (and) is referred to only as a single head without a body….
>
> And if you say: "Who is *'Atika Kadisha?"* Come and see. Beyond the heights above, there is that which is not known, is not recognized, and is not described; and it comprises everything, and two heads are comprised in it. And everything is prepared thus….
>
> The place where the beginning (of emanation) commences from *'Atika Kadisha* … is the light of *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom), which spreads

> out into thirty-two directions, and emerges from the concealed Brain (Source), from the light that is in it.
>
> That which *'Atika Kadisha* illuminated first of all ... became three heads (the *sefirot* of *Ḥokhmah, Binah* and *Da'at*), and one head comprised them all. These three spread out to *Ẓe'ir Anpin* (the Short-faced or Impatient One), and all is illuminated through these.
>
> *Zohar 3:289b–290a, WZ1 pp.334–35*

The *Zohar* then elaborates on the further emanation of the *sefirot*, concluding:

> When this *'Atika*, the Will of wills, reveals itself, everything shines, and everything experiences perfect joy.
>
> *Zohar 3:289b–290a, WZ1 pp.336*

The *Zohar* also refers to "the oil of the holy anointing which flows and emerges from *'Atika Kadisha*",[1] meaning the divine 'influence' or divine will emanating from the Godhead. The image of the oil flowing from the head, beard and garments of *'Atika Kadisha* is used to convey the idea of the flowing out of the divine will from the Godhead into the creation by means of the *sefirot*.

See also: **Ayn-Sof**, **erekh apayim**, **sefirot** (4.1).

1. *Zohar* 2:7b–8a, *WZ1* p.431.

aur, **aur 'olam**, **aur panekha** (He) *Lit.* light *(aur);* eternal or everlasting light *(aur 'olam);* light of Your countenance *(aur panekha).* Literally, *aur* refers to outer light. Spiritually, *aur* refers to the light of understanding, or to the primal light of God, as in expressions such as *aur 'olam* and *aur panekha.* Many biblical passages cover both meanings. Isaiah, speaking as God, says:

> I will make darkness light *(aur)* before them.
>
> *Isaiah 42:16, KJV*

He also observes:

> We wait for light *(aur),* but behold darkness:
> for brightness, but we walk in gloom.
>
> *Isaiah 59:9, KB*

In other places, the meaning is more specific:

> The sun shall be no more thy light *(aur)* by day;
> Neither for brightness shall the moon
> give light *(aur)* to thee;
> But the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light *(aur 'olam)*.
>
> *Isaiah 60:19–20, KJV*

In mystic and spiritual literature, God is always associated with light. In *Genesis*, God's first act of creation is to make light:

> And God said, "Let there be light!":
> and there was light.
>
> *Genesis 1:3, KJV*

Light is a manifestation of God's will. The medieval Kabbalists also spoke of God Himself as the Primal Light or the *Aur Ayn-Sof* (Light of the Infinite), and understood creation to be the outpouring and channelling of the divine Light into its different qualities, levels or aspects (the *sefirot*).

See also: **Ayn-Sof**, **countenance of God**.

Aur Ayn-Sof (He) *Lit.* Light *(Aur)* of the Infinite *(Ayn-Sof)*; Light of *Ayn-Sof.*

See **Ayn-Sof**.

avināshī (S/H), **abināshī**, **abināsī** (Pu) *Lit.* not *(a)* destructible *(vināshī)*; indestructible, imperishable, everlasting, unchangeable, undying, immortal, deathless; descriptive of God, and thus of the soul and also the perfect *Guru*. Many mystics have used the word. God is the eternal Source:

> Know That by which everything is pervaded
> to be indestructible *(avināshī)*.
> No one has the power to destroy this Immutable.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 2:17; cf. BGT*

> The sun, the moon, the sky and the earth
> will all pass away.
> Wind and water, too, will both vanish.
> The imperishable *(avināshī)* Lord alone
> will live on forever.
>
> *Mīrābāī, Shabdāvalī, Upadesh 16:2, MBS p.8*

> Ever moveless (*nihchal,* immutable)
> is the one imperishable *(abināsī)* Lord:
> Himself, he who meditates on Him
> becomes eternal *(nihchal)* as well.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1076, MMS*

The true Master is one with this Source:

> Eternal and immortal is my true *Guru:*
> he comes not, nor goes he (in birth and death).
> He himself is the imperishable Lord *(abināsī Purakh),*
> who is contained amongst all.
>
> *Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 759, MMS*

The soul is also indestructible and one with the eternal:

> He (Yājñavalkya) replied, "Of course, my dear, I am saying nothing confusing. This self, my dear, is indeed imperishable *(avināshī)* and of an indestructible *(anuchchitti)* nature."
>
> *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 4:5.14*

Awwal, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the First; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh*. God is the First; He was before the beginning, before time. Everything proceeds from Him; He alone is self-existent. *Al-Awwal* is generally paired with *al-Ākhir,* meaning the Last, conveying the idea that God is the First and the Last, encompassing all things.

See also: **al-Ākhir**, **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

Ayin (He) *Lit.* nothing; without substance. The Kabbalah describes a three-part Godhead, made up of the *Ayn-Sof* (the Infinite, the primal divine Source), *Ayin* (Nothing, also called *Ayin Kadmon,* the Primal Nothing) and *Yesh* (Something).

In the *Zohar,* the term *Ayin* is also used synonymously with *Keter* (Crown) for the highest *sefirah* (emanation) in the Kabbalah's system of successive *sefirot* (emanations) that give rise to the creation. *Ayin* or *Keter* is understood as being pre-existent with the *Ayn-Sof,* and at the same level.

The *Ayn-Sof* is God at rest: self-contained, self-illuminated, self-absorbed. But when It wants to project itself – when the primal divine Being wills to extend itself outside that self-containment – then a process of emanation and creation begins. *Ayn-Sof* was perceived by the Kabbalists as being so tran-

scendent that It was beyond the will, or even the 'Will to will', to create. *Ayin* is the aspect of the Godhead described as the 'Will to will' to create; it is the source or potential of the supreme Will, the first expression or manifestation of the divine Reality. The difference between *Ayin* (or *Keter*) and *Ayn-Sof* is elucidated in the *Zohar:*

> *Ayn-Sof* cannot be known, and does not produce end or beginning like the primal *Ayin,* which does bring forth beginning and end. What is beginning? The supernal Point, which is the beginning of all, concealed and resting within thought, and producing end that is called "the end of the matter".[1] But there are no end, no wills, no lights, no luminaries in *Ayn-Sof.* All these luminaries and lights depend on It for their existence, but they are not in a position to perceive. That which knows, but does not know, is none but the supernal will, the secret of all secrets, *Ayin.* And when the supernal Point and the world to come ascend, they know only the scent, like someone who inhales a scent, and is perfumed by it.
>
> *Zohar 2:239a, WZ1 p.257*

Ayin "knows, but does not know" because only *Ayin* has knowledge, albeit slight, of the nature of *Ayn-Sof.* From *Ayin's* subtle essence of 'will' is generated the third aspect of the Godhead, which the second *sefirah* of *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom), the divine will itself, manifested as a creative force; this then acts upon the third *sefirah* of *Binah* (Understanding). *Ḥokhmah* is essentially the positive or active aspect of the primal will, which acts upon the receptive aspect of *Binah* in the course of its self-projection. When *Ḥokhmah* acted upon *Binah,* the other seven *sefirot* were emanated, and all the other stages of creation came successively into being.

The *Zohar* also describes *Ḥokhmah* as *Yesh,* meaning 'something'. Thus, Something *(Yesh)* comes out of Nothing *(Ayin);* meaning that existence, or substance, is generated from the total spirituality of the eternal divine Reality, which has no form or substance. This is the seeming paradox that confounded philosophers, who phrased it as 'something from nothing':

> The inner power is called *Ayin* because thought does not grasp It, nor reflection. Concerning this, Job said, "Wisdom comes into being out of *ayin.*"[2]
>
> *Asher ben David, in KKA p.84, in EKH p.66*

Ayin is also used for the state of nothingness, the highest level of transcendence in Kabbalist meditation.

See also: **Ayn-Sof**, **Keter**, **sefirot** (4.1), **Yesh** (3.1).

1. *Ecclesiastes* 12:13.
2. *Job* 28:12; usually translated, "where is Wisdom to be found". *ayin* means either 'nothing' or 'where'.

'Ayn (A/P) (pl. *'uyūn, a'yun, a'yān) Lit.* essence; also, eye or vision; also, fountain or spring; the one divine Essence or Source that mystics say lies behind the manifold forms of the creation. Maghribī writes:

> There is but one Essence *('Ayn)*
> among all these essences *(a'yān);*
> Only one Named, amid all these names.
> *Maghribī, in FNI1 p.77; cf. SSE1 p.105*

The one Name underlying all these names is *al-Ism al-A'ẓam* (the Greatest Name), a term for the divine creative power.

Ibn 'Arabī says that God created the creation as a means of objectifying His own Essence *('Ayn),* so that He could experience Himself:

> God wanted to see His own Essence *('Ayn)* in one universal creation *(kawn),* which, having been blessed with existence *(al-wujūd),* contained the divine Order *(al-Amr),* so that there He could manifest His mystery *(sirr)* to Himself.
> *Ibn 'Arabī, Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam, FH p.48; cf. WP p.8*

Using the term in the sense of that which is visible or objective, Rūmī says that *'ayn* signifies how the "unseen" has become the "seen" through the process of divine "emanation":

> Why does the part keep aloof from the Whole?
> What has caused this diverse mixture?
> Behold how the genus, by differentiation, has become species:
> Behold how the unseen things, by emanation,
> have become the seen *('ayn).*
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:2581–82; cf. MJR2 p.354*

See also: **'ayn** (▸2), **Ayn-Sof**.

'Ayn al-thābitah, al- (A), **'Ayn-i śābitah** (P) *Lit.* the fixed, stable or unchanging *(thābitah)* Essence *('Ayn);* the divine Essence within all things; also, the potential or hidden nature of something or some created being that underlies its existence, sometimes explained as an 'idea' in the 'mind' of God; sometimes also, as *al-'Ayn,* the highest divine Essence.

Ayn-Sof (He) *Lit.* without *(ayn)* limit *(sof);* without end, limitless, infinite; the transcendent, hidden, concealed Godhead. A term coined by medieval Jewish Kabbalists for the supreme God, sometimes translated as the Void, the Great Abyss. *Ayn* is a contracted form of the noun *ayin* (nothing). *Ayn-Sof* was commonly identified with the primal divine Light – the originating Point of spiritual light, which was called *Aur Ayn-Sof* (Light of the *Ayn-Sof*). Sixteenth-century Kabbalist Rabbi Ḥayyim Vital, disciple and successor of Rabbi Isaac Luria of Safed, explains:

> You should know that before the emanations were emanated and the creations created, a most supreme, simple Light filled the whole of existence. There was no vacant place, no aspect of empty space or void, but everything was filled by that simple Light of the Infinite *(Aur Ayn-Sof)*. It had no aspect of beginning or end, but was all one simple, completely uniform Light, and this is what is called the Light of the Infinite *(Aur Ayn-Sof)*.
>
> *Ḥayyim Vital, Sefer 'Eẓ Ḥayyim (Book of the Tree of Life) 22, TL pp.11, 13*

The term *Ayn-Sof* first occurs in the anonymous, twelfth-century *Sefer ha-Bahir (Book of Brilliance),* but is not used as a specific name for the Godhead until the time of the *Zohar* (thirteenth century). From then onwards, the term is used extensively by Jewish mystics to refer to the level or realm of pure spirituality that existed before the creation and from where the creation emanated.

The *Ayn-Sof* is God at rest, self-contained, self-illuminated, self-absorbed – hidden and unknowable "in the depths of His nothingness", as the thirteenth-century Kabbalists described it. When this supreme Reality or Being wants to project itself outside that self-containment, then the process of emanation and creation begins. The *Ayn-Sof,* or Root of all roots as It was also called by the early Kabbalists, was considered to be beyond the level of the personalized God of the Bible. The process of emanation, they taught, began from the first *sefirah* (emanation) of *Keter* (Crown), also called *Ayin* (Nothing). The *Ayin,* though a part of the Godhead, was the first outward expression of the divine Reality. It is not the creative will itself, but the source of that will. They called it the 'Will to will' to create. As the *Zohar* says:

> *Ayn-Sof* cannot be known, and does not produce end or beginning like the primal *Ayin,* which does bring forth beginning and end.... But there are no end, no wills, no lights, no luminaries in *Ayn-Sof.* All these luminaries and lights depend on It for their existence, but they are not in a position to perceive.
>
> *Zohar 2:239a, WZ1 p.257*

The sixteenth-century Rabbi Isaac Luria described the first stage in the process of creation as the withdrawal *(zimzum)* of the *Ayn-Sof* into Itself, in order to leave a vacuum within which the creation could take place. The cosmic 'catastrophe', as he described it, of *shevirat ha-kelim* (breaking of the vessels), released the primal Light of the *Ayn-Sof* into the material creation.

The *Ayn-Sof* is God in His absolute purity; Its essence is pure divine Love. Naturally, anything that proceeds out of the *Ayn-Sof* also has this quality. The essence of *Ayn-Sof* is carried via the *sefirot* (emanations) into the creation, as the ray of sunlight carries the quality of its source, the sun. The *Zohar* also describes the relationship of the *Ayn-Sof* to the *sefirot* as the ocean to water, which divides into a number of streams. Concerning this oneness of the *Ayn-Sof* with all existence, the sixteenth-century Kabbalist Moses Cordovero writes:

> Do not attribute duality to God. Let God be solely God. If you suppose that *Ayn-Sof* emanates until a certain point, and that from that point on is outside of It, you have dualized. Realize, rather, that *Ayn-Sof* exists in each existent (thing). Do not say, "This is a stone and not God." God forbid! Rather, all existence is God, and the stone is a thing pervaded by divinity.
>
> *Moses Cordovero, Shi'ur Komah (Modena ms.) 206b, on Zohar 3:14b (Idra Rabbah), in EKH p.24*[1]

And:

> Before anything emanated, there was only *Ayn-Sof*. *Ayn-Sof* was all that existed. Similarly, after It brought into being that which exists, there is nothing but It. You cannot find anything that exists apart from It. There is nothing that is not pervaded by the power of divinity. If there were, *Ayn-Sof* would be limited, subject to duality. Rather, God is everything that exists, though everything that exists is not God. It is present in everything, and everything comes into being from It. Nothing is devoid of Its divinity. Everything is within It; It is within everything and outside of everything. There is nothing but It.
>
> *Moses Cordovero, Elimah Rabbati, EMC 24d–25a, in EKH p.24*

Similarly, the thirteenth-century Moses de León says:

> God is unified oneness – one without two, inestimable. Genuine divine existence engenders the existence of all of creation. The sublime, inner essences secretly constitute a chain linking everything from the highest to the lowest, extending from the upper pool to the edge of the universe.

There is nothing – not even the tiniest thing – that is not fastened to the links of this chain. Everything is catenated in Its mystery, caught in Its oneness. God is one; God's secret is one; all the worlds below and above are all mysteriously one. Divine existence is indivisible.

The entire chain is one. Down to the last link, everything is linked with everything else; so divine essence is below as well as above, in heaven and on earth. There is nothing else.

Moses de León, Sefer ha-Rimmon, SRBP pp.181–82, in EKH p.26

Likewise, the thirteenth-century 'Azri'el of Gerona attempts to describe the infinite and unbounded quality of *Ayn-Sof,* and yet Its oneness with all existence:

Anything visible, and anything that can be grasped by thought, is bounded. Anything bounded is finite. Anything finite is not undifferentiated. Conversely, the boundless is called *Ayn-Sof,* Infinite. It is absolute undifferentiation in perfect, changeless oneness. Since It is boundless, there is nothing outside of It. Since It transcends and conceals Itself, It is the essence of everything hidden and revealed....

Emanating from *Ayn-Sof* are the ten *sefirot.* They constitute the process by which all things come into being and pass away. They energize every existent thing that can be quantified. Since all things come into being by means of the *sefirot,* they differ from one another; yet they all derive from one root. Everything is from *Ayn-Sof;* there is nothing outside of It.

One should avoid fashioning metaphors regarding *Ayn-Sof;* but in order to help you understand, you can compare *Ayn-Sof* to a candle from which hundreds of millions of other candles are kindled. Though some shine brighter than others, compared to the first light they are all the same, all deriving from that one source. The first light and all the others are, in effect, incomparable. Nor can their priority compare with Its, for It surpasses them; their energy emanates from It. No change takes place in It – the energy of emanation simply manifests through differentiation.

Ayn-Sof cannot be conceived, certainly not expressed, though It is intimated in every thing, for there is nothing outside of It. No letter, no name, no writing, no thing can confine It. The witness testifying in writing that there is nothing outside of It is: "I am that I am."[2] *Ayn-Sof* has no will, no intention, no desire, no thought, no speech, no action – yet there is nothing outside of It.

'Azri'el of Gerona, Commentary on the Ten Sefirot, in DEG 2b–c, 3a–d, in EKH pp.29–30; cf. in EKD pp.89–91, 93–94

The understandable human desire to know something of the divine creative process, of how the completely peaceful and undisturbed One came to create the multiplicity of creation, has led to a number of different descriptions of a threefold, a fourfold or an even more complex Godhead. That human descriptions can really represent the reality is impossible. Even so, there are certainly significant similarities between descriptions of Indian mystics, Sufis, gnostics and Kabbalists. Similarities in such descriptions can arise from entirely independent mystic experience, or by the borrowing of terminology and cosmogony, or by a combination of the two.

See also: **sefirot** (4.1).

1. See also Bracha Sack, in *Tarbits* 58 (1989) p.213.
2. *Exodus* 3:14, *KJV*.

ayoni (S/H), **ajoni** (H/Pu), **ajūnī** (Pu) *Lit.* not *(a)* + womb *(yoni, jūnī);* not born from the womb; unborn, birthless; hence, without origin, beginning, source or cause; thus, the sourceless One; the ever existent, eternal One; descriptive of God, also used for *Brahmā* and *Shiva.* As Kālidāsa writes:

> You are the source *(yoni)* of the universe *(jagat),*
> yet without a source *(ayoni).*
> You are the end *(anta)* of the universe,
> yet without end *(nirantaka).*
> You are the beginning *(ādi)* of the universe,
> yet without beginning *(anādi).*
> You are the Lord *(Īsha)* of the universe,
> yet without a lord *(nirīshvara).*
>
> *Kālidāsa, Kumārasambhava 2:9, KDG p.143*

Ajūnī also occurs in the *Mūl Mantra* of the *Ādi Granth,* depicting the unborn, self-existent nature of the Supreme Being who is unborn; that is, he never incarnates, and is self-existent:

> There is but one God *(Ekankār):*
> True is His Name, creative His personality,
> and immortal His form *(Sat Nām Kartā Purakh).*
> He is without fear, sans enmity,
> unborn *(ajūnī)* and self-illumined.
> By the *Guru*'s grace, (He is obtained).
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1, MMS*

See also: **ajanmā**.

azal (A/P) *Lit.* without beginning; eternity; pre-eternity; commonly paired with *abad* (endless); hence, God, who is *azal* (beginningless) and *abad* (endless). *Azal* is the Beginning, the Source, the eternity that existed before the creation.

See also: **abad, eternal realm**.

azal al-azal (A), **azal-i azal** (P) *Lit.* eternity *(azal)* of eternity *(azal);* the ultimate eternity; the Being without attributes who existed before the creation of any names or attributes; sometimes associated with God's divine knowledge of all things; that is, He who existed before the pre-eternity *(azal),* who is the Cause of all that has been caused, and has perfect knowledge of every atom in His creation.

See also: **eternal realm**.

'Aẓīm, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Great, the Magnificent, the Supreme; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh. 'Aẓīm* implies great, large, strong, powerful, mighty; grand, imposing, stately, magnificent; high in dignity, lofty, exalted, august, sublime, splendid, glorious, superb, tremendous, immense:

> So celebrate with praises
> the name of thy Lord, the Supreme *(al-'Aẓīm).*
>
> *Qur'ān 56:96, AYA*

> To Him belongs
> all that is in the heavens and on earth:
> And He is the Most High, the Most Great *(al-'Aẓīm).*
>
> *Qur'ān 42:4; cf. AYA*

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

baḥr (A/P), **baḥr-i 'aṭā', baḥr-i bī-pāyān, baḥr-i jūd, baḥr-i muḥīṭ, baḥr-i nā-mutanāhī** (P) *Lit.* ocean or sea *(baḥr)* of giving *('aṭā'),* ocean of grace; limitless or infinite ocean *(baḥr-i bī-pāyān, baḥr-i nā-mutanāhī);* ocean of bounty *(baḥr-i jūd);* all-embracing ocean *(baḥr-i muḥīṭ). Baḥr* also means an estuary or a large river. Generally, the Arabic *baḥr* connotes a larger expanse than the Persian *daryā* (sea). As an image for the divine, the ocean or sea conveys the vast, unbounded unity of God. Jāmī says:

Where there is the perfection of Your divinity,
the world is like a drop of the sea
of Your giving *(baḥr-i 'aṭā')*.
How can we with our limits express Your laud and praise?
Only You Yourself are worthy to praise Yourself.

Jāmī, Lavā'iḥ, in FLI p.189

Hilālī likewise describes God as the *baḥr-i jūd* (sea of bounty), an expression conveying the limitless generosity of divine favour. In Sufi parlance, from the "fish to the moon" alludes to all levels of the creation, from the lowest to the highest:

Before Him, the moon prostrates;
The fish is drowned in the sea of bounty *(baḥr-i jūd)*.
What a Creator! That from the fish to the moon,
all bear witness, testifying to the oneness of His Essence.

Hilālī, Dīvān, in FLI p.187

The metaphor of the sea conveys not only the vastness of God, but also the unbounded oneness of all. God is the sea, and the whole of creation is its waves:

It is a sea *(baḥr)* that neither decreases nor increases,
but the waves upon it come and go.
The whole world consists of these waves:
it lasts not two minutes, not even two seconds.

Jāmī, Lavā'iḥ, in FLI p.188

He is an unbounded sea of unity, but that sea has created seeming multiplicity and difference through the rising and swirling of its waves:

A sea *(baḥr)*, which has created difference by its own waves,
a cloud, which is exactly like its drops, abundant in number:
It is like the one sun,
which suffuses two worlds full of light with its reflection.

'Aṭṭār, in FLI p.187

Even so, as Lāhījī explains, in essence, the waves are not different from the sea, though they appear different:

The word 'sea *(baḥr)*', either in singular or plural form, in combination with other words, is used quite often in Sufi literature. In essence, it is a metaphor expressing the ocean of existence *(baḥr-i hastī)*,

absolute existence or oneness in existence, seas of divinity *(biḥār-i ulūhīyat)* or seas of inspiration *(biḥār-i ilhām)*. Believers in the oneness or unity of existence *(waḥdat al-wujūd)* state that creation and all creatures in it are one being: the sea of existence *(baḥr-i hastī)*, with various waves. Waves are exactly as the sea *(baḥr)*, although they may look different. Beings and their diversity also are the waves of the sea of existence *(baḥr-i hastī)*.

This metaphor also denotes the level of the Lord's Essence and His infinite attributes, which all in existence are expressed as being like waves of His infinite sea *(baḥr-i nā-mutanāhī)*.

Lāhījī, Sharḥ-i Gulshan-i Rāz, in FLI pp.186–87

Rūmī speaks of the fish that swim in the divine Ocean of Life. The fish ask the Ocean why He created everything. Quoting a traditional saying *(ḥadīth)* of Muḥammad, the Ocean replies, "I was a hidden treasure, and I wanted to be known, so I created the world":[1]

Like fish we say to the Ocean of Life *(Baḥr-i Ḥayāt)*, "Why did You send up waves and throw us onto the dryness of water and clay? You possess such mercy, why did You give us such torment? O Your mercilessness is sweeter than the mercy of all the merciful creatures of the world!"

The Ocean *(Baḥr)* replies, "I was a hidden treasure, so I wanted to be known. I was a treasure, concealed behind the curtain of the Unseen, hidden in the retreat of no-place. I wanted my Beauty and Majesty to be known through the veils of existence. I wanted everyone to see what sort of Water of Life and Alchemy of Happiness I am."

The fish answer, "We who are fish in this sea, from the first we swam in this Ocean of Life *(Baḥr-i Ḥayāt)*. We knew its tremendousness and gentleness, for we are the copper that receives the elixir of this ultimate Alchemy. We knew the mightiness of this Elixir of Life. As much as we spoke of it to those who are not fish of this sea, they did not listen, see or understand. From the first we were the knowers of this treasure, and at the last we will know it. So at whom did You direct such a long exile for the sake of 'I wanted to be known'?"

The answer comes, "O fish! True enough, a fish knows the water's worth, loves the sea, and clings to union with it. But his love is not of the same kind, so hot and burning, with such self-abandonment, with such lamentation and weeping of blood, and with such roasting of the liver, as the love of that fish who has been thrown upon dry land by the waves and for a long time struggles and tosses upon the hot earth and burning sand. 'He shall neither die therein, nor live.'[2] Separation from the Ocean *(Baḥr)* allows him no taste of life's

sweetness – after all, that is separation from the Ocean of Life. How should someone who has seen that Ocean find joy in this life?"

Rūmī, Majālis-i Sab'ah 29; cf. in SPL pp.70–71

Sufis also use the imagery of 'two seas': the sea of the divine and the sea of the manifest. Hence, because he is a personification of the Divine in this world, the Master or *Murshid* is sometimes called the 'meeting place of the two seas'.

See also: **baḥr** (4.1), **daryā**, **shānti sāgar**, **sukh sāgar**.

1. *Ḥadīth, AMBF* 70, in *MDI* p.189.
2. *Qur'ān* 87:13.

Bāqī, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Enduring, the Everlasting; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh.* The annihilation of the self is called *fanā',* and the state attained after *fanā'* is *baqā',* the enduring and everlasting existence in God. In Sufism, one who has reached this state of existence after the annihilation of the self is described as *bāqī.* God, *al-Bāqī,* is He whose existence is forever. The term appears as a verb form in the *Qur'ān:*

All that there is in the universe shall vanish:
the countenance of thy Lord alone shall endure *(yabqá)* –
The Lord of resplendent majesty and glory!

Qur'ān 55:26–27, QAL

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**, **baqā'** (▸2), **fanā'** (▸2).

Baṣīr, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the All-Seeing, the Seer; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh. Al-Baṣīr* is considered to be one of the essential names of God, names that refer to qualities that are always and essentially a part of God. There is never a time or place that is beyond His sight:

Like Him there is naught;
He is the All-Hearing *(al-Samī'),* the All-Seeing *(al-Baṣīr)!*

Qur'ān 42:11, KI

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**, **baṣar** (▸2).

Bāṭin, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Inward; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh.*

Al-Bāṭin is often paired with *al-Ẓāhir*, the Outward. *Al-Bāṭin* is that which is hidden, inward, unseen in the world of phenomena; *al-Ẓāhir* is that which is manifested visibly in the creation, that which is visible. God is both, *al-Bāṭin* and *al-Ẓāhir:*

> He is the First and the Last,
> the Outward and the Inward *(al-Bāṭin);*
> He has knowledge of everything.
>
> *Qur'ān 57:3, KI*

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**, **bāṭin** (▸2).

bayit (He) *Lit.* house.

See **house of God**.

beant (Pu) *Lit.* without *(be)* number, limit, end *(ant);* hence, limitless, endless, unending, countless, numberless, infinite; descriptive of God:

> The *Vedas* know not God's greatness;
> *Brahmās* can realize not His secrets;
> The incarnations know not His limit:
> infinite *(beant)* is God, the transcendent Lord.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 894, MMS*

Begampurā (H/Pu), **Begam** (H) *Lit.* city *(pur)* without *(be)* sorrow *(gam);* city or land without grief or suffering, without gloom; a land where none of the problems, miseries and sorrows of the physical realm exist; a blissful land free from all types of pain and suffering; an epithet of the eternal realm as described by some Indian mystics, such as Ravidās and Kabīr. The name sometimes appears simply as *Begam.*

Rising through the inner realms, the soul experiences increasing bliss and love until it finally arrives at the eternal realm, the home of eternal bliss. It is this state or region of eternity that Kabīr and Ravidās have called *Begampurā* or *Begam* – the land without suffering:

> *Begam* is my home, O friend.
> To kings and paupers,
> to emperors and *faqīrs,*
> to one and all I give the call:

If you long for the supreme state *(param pad)*,
come and dwell in my home.

Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 1, Bhed Bānī 8:1, KSS1 p.60

And:

Begampurā is the name of the town:
at that place there is no pain or worry.
There is no fear of tax of goods there:
neither awe, nor error, nor dread nor decline is there.
I have now found an excellent abode:
my brethren, there is everlasting safety there.
Firm, stable and for aye is the sovereignty of God:
there is no second or third, He alone is there.
Populated and ever famous is that city:
the wealthy and the content dwell there.
As they please, so do they stroll about:
they are the knowers of the Master's mansion,
so none does obstruct them.
Says Ravidās, the emancipated shoemaker,
he who is my fellow citizen is a friend of mine.

Ravidās, Ādi Granth 345, MMS

Beloved One held dear; mystically, the Lord or Master; used throughout Hebrew, Christian, Indian and Sufi literature, where the Beloved is the Lord or Master and the soul is the lover. In Christianity, the Beloved is usually Jesus or the Word. In Hebrew, the terms used are *Yedid* (Beloved, Friend) and *Dōd* (Beloved); in Arabic and Persian, terms such as *Maḥbūb, Ma'shūq, Dilbar* (Beloved) and *Dūst* (Friend) are common; in Hindi and Punjabi, the usual terms are *Pyārā* (H), *Piārā* (Pu), *Sājan* (H), *Sajjan* (Pu) and *Prītam* (H/Pu), all meaning 'Beloved', and *Mitra* (H) or *Mittar* (Pu), meaning 'Friend'.

See also: **Beloved** (▸2), **Dūst**, **Prītam**.

Bhagavān, Bhagavant, Bhagavat (S), **Bhagvān, Bhagvant** (H/Pu) *Lit.* fortunate, prosperous; glorious, illustrious; divine, holy, venerable; adorable; hence, a revered, venerable, holy or illustrious personage; generally used as honorific forms of address, expressing veneration or great respect to great spiritual personalities and deities. As such, these terms are applied to God, to the Vedic gods and *ṛishis,* to Kṛishṇa, *Vishṇu, Shiva,* to holy men and Masters, and so on, and often translated as Lord or God.

Bhagavān implies the supreme, divine Personality who embodies the six majestic excellencies *(shaḍ aishvarya)* of traditional Hindu thought: wisdom *(jñāna)*, virtue *(dharma)*, power *(vīrya)*, glory *(yasha)*, beauty or splendour *(shrī)* and dispassion or detachment *(vairāgya)*. According to the *Vishṇu Purāṇa*,[1] *Bhagavān* is He who knows the beginning and the end, the arrival and the departure of all beings. He also knows the boundaries of *vidyā* (knowledge) and *avidyā* (spiritual ignorance, nescience). Edward Rice writes:

> *Bhagavān* is also *Brahman*, the supreme and eternal ground of all reality, absolute, transcendent, unconceivable, unmanifest, unique. As *Paramātman*, *Bhagavān* is the Self abiding in the heart of every being, and as *Īshvara*, the supreme Ruler and Controller of nature and of the universe. The work that best expresses the concept of *Bhagavān* is the *Bhagavad Gītā*, where He is the good and the gracious Lord, He whom many virtually touch, friend and divine lover, saviour and refuge, charming, compassionate and beautiful to behold.
>
> *Edward Rice, Eastern Definitions, ED pp.55–56*

Bhagavān is commonly used in Indian literature as an appellation of God. The *Upanishads* say:

> Dwelling in the secret heart of all beings,
> the Lord *(Bhagavān)* is all-pervading *(sarvavyāpi)*.
> Therefore, He is the omnipresent and gracious One.
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 3:11*

> Because of delusion, he (the deluded one)
> does not see the Lord *(Prabhu)*, the Holy One *(Bhagavant)*,
> the inner inspirer, dwelling within him.
>
> *Maitrī Upanishad 3:2*

Other mystics have likewise used the name:

> As is a dream and a show, so know thou this world to be:
> Nānak, without the Lord *(Bhagvān)*, nothing is true in these.
>
> *Guru Tegh Bahādur, Ādi Granth 1427, MMS*

And:

> You will never be free from birth and death,
> without surrendering yourself to God *(Bhagvant)*....

You cannot gauge the value of just one *gharī* (24 minutes),
let alone that of a whole day.
Says Sahajo, do not waste your time
without devotion to God *(Bhagvān).*

Sahajobāī, Bānī, Nām 1, 7, SBB pp.29–30

1. *Vishṇu Purāṇa* 6:5.78.

bimal (Pu) *Lit.* without *(bi)* dirt *(mal);* free from stain, pure, immaculate, spotless; hence, beautiful, attractive, transparent; the supreme spiritual state free from illusion or *māyā;* also descriptive of the Lord and the *Satguru* (true Master).

See also: **nirmal**.

blessed abode See **abode**.

Brahman (S), **Brahm(a)** (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* swelling of the Spirit; from the Sanskrit *brih,* to make, to form, to grow; the potential for infinite growth, expansion or development; outpouring of Spirit; spiritual effusion or utterance. A term frequently encountered in the *Upanishads,* the *Bhagavad Gītā* and other religious and philosophical literature of India for God or the absolute Reality, as the all-pervading, self-existent Power, the supreme Soul, the transcendental Intelligence.

In the vernacular form (*e.g.* in Hindi and Punjabi), *Brahman* is commonly contracted to *Brahm* or *Brahma,* a form which should not be confused with *Brahmā,* the creator-deity of the Hindu triad *(Brahmā, Vishṇu* and *Shiva).* In fact, the Hindu triad are sometimes described as the 'sons' of *Brahman,* in the sense that they are emanations from *Brahman. Brahmā* is regarded as the deity or power that presides over the creation of this universe. *Brahman* is the all-knowing, all-seeing, all-pervading transcendent Absolute, the supreme Self.

Brahman should also be distinguished from *brāhmaṇ* (sometimes anglicized as brahmin), the first of the four Hindu castes, as also from the *Brāhmaṇas,* the theological manuals forming part of the *Vedas.*

Brahman or *Brahm* appear in a number of contexts:

Brahman *in the* Vedas

The meaning of *Brahman* or *Brahm* is commonly understood in Indian philosophy from its use in the *Upanishads,* where it refers to the supreme

Reality. In the *Vedas,* however, which are by far the oldest of Hindu sacred texts, the name does not usually appear in that particular sense. A number of scholars have observed that it means a prayer, a hymn, a chant or a magic formula, often identified with various deities. Others have pointed to instances where *brahman* means a food offering, the chant of the *Sāma* singer, a duly completed ceremony, the prayer and sacrificial gift combined, the recitation of the priest, and so on.

In the *Ṛig Veda,* certainly written down by 1500 BCE, although some scholars date the hymns as early as 3000, 4500 or even 6000 BCE, prayer *(brahman)* is praised as the protecting arm of the devotee, and it is considered that a sacrifice without prayer *(abrahman)* does not please God. However, *brahman* is not only the prayer, but also includes devotion, the uplifting, spiritualizing and internal aspect of the prayer.

Brahman *in the* Upanishads

During the period in which the *Upanishads* were written, generally thought to have been between 400 BCE (or earlier) to 200 BCE, the concept of *Brahman* underwent a general enlargement and universalizing of its meaning. *Brahman* came to refer to that which the various writers of the *Upanishads* understood to be absolute Reality, outside of which nothing exists or has any reality. *Brahman* was perceived as the divine Cause of the universe from which all created things emanate and to which they return. This understanding is the underlying theme throughout the *Upanishads,* the *Bhagavad Gītā* and allied literature:

> Truly, all this (universe) is *Brahman*
> *(sarvaṃ khalvidaṃ Brahma).*
> From It, all things originate,
> into It they dissolve, and by It are they sustained.
> On It *(Brahman),* one should peacefully meditate.
>
> *Chhāndogya Upanishad 3:14.1*

Brahman is thus the beginning and end of all things:

> I will declare that which is to be known,
> by knowing which immortality is attained.
> It is the supreme *(param) Brahman,* which is beginningless,
> and which is said to be neither existent nor nonexistent.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 13:12*

> That immortal *Brahman* is to the front,
> that *Brahman* is to the rear,
> that *Brahman* is to the right and left.

It pervades everything, above and below:
that supreme *Brahman* is Itself this universe.
Muṇḍaka Upanishad 2:2.12

In the *Bhagavad Gītā,* Kṛishṇa is identified as a personification of *Brahman:*

You are the supreme *Brahman,*
the supreme abode, the utterly holy.
You are the eternal, divine, primal God,
the unborn and all-pervading Being.
Bhagavad Gītā 10:12

The individual self is also identified with *Brahman* as the supreme Self in all:

The Spirit that is in the sun,
that Spirit am I:
Om, the eternal *Brahman.*
Yajur Veda 40:17, CV p.151

This (self) was indeed *Brahman* in the beginning.
It knew Itself only as "I am *Brahman.*"
Therefore It became all.
And whoever among the gods had this enlightenment,
also became That *(Brahman).*
Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 1:4.10, U3 p.122

That, verily, from which all beings are born;
That by which, being born, they live;
That into which, on departing, they enter:
Seek to know That. That is *Brahman.*
Taittirīya Upanishad 3:1.1

The realization of *Brahman* is the highest human goal.... *Brahman* does exist – He who by nature is eternally pure, conscious, free, omniscient and endowed with all powers.... The existence of *Brahman* is well known, because *Brahman* is the Self within all.
Shankara, on Brahma Sūtras 1:1.1

In the *Upanishads,* the terms *Brahman* and *ātman* (soul) both denote the First Principle of the universe. The reality and essence of the *ātman* is *Brahman.* Hence, the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* says:

> This *ātman* is *Brahman*.
>
> *Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 2:5.19*

The identity of *Brahman* and the *ātman*, of God and the soul, is an important theme of the *Upanishads*. It is expressed in a number of terse statements where "That" is *Brahman* and "I" is the *ātman*. For instance:

> Thou art That.
>
> *Chhāndogya Upanishad 6:8.7*

> I am *Brahman*.
>
> *Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 1:4.10*

> Truly, That *(Brahman)* is this – Truth *(Satya)* alone.
>
> *Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 5:4.1*

Various attempts are made in the *Upanishads* to describe the nature of *Brahman*. *Brahman* is said to be:

1. *Satya, jñāna, ananta* (truth, knowledge and infinitude).[1]
2. *Satyasya satyam* (the Truth of truth).[2]
3. *Sachchidānanda* (being, consciousness and bliss).[3]
4. *Satya, jñāna, ananta ānanda* (truth, knowledge and infinite bliss).[4]

But no description will enable a person to comprehend the essential nature of *Brahman*, for *Brahman* Itself is beyond description, and Its essential nature remains unknowable by normal human means of comprehension. This unknowableness of *Brahman* is summarized succinctly in the famous phrase, "*Neti neti* (not this, not that)".[5] To illustrate the point, the great philosopher-mystic Shankara relates a story in his commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras*.[6] "Sir," said a pupil to his Master, "Teach me the nature of *Brahman*." The Master did not reply and remained silent. When he was asked a second or third time, he answered: "I *am* teaching you, but you do not listen. His name is silence."

As the nature of *Brahman* cannot be explained in words, It is often described by what It is not. In various places It is said to be: *abhaya* (fearless), *achala* (immovable, permanent), *achintya* (inconceivable), *achyuta* (changeless), *adrishya* (invisible), *agochara* (imperceptible, indescribable), *aja* (unborn), *ajara* (ageless, undecaying, imperishable), *akshara* (immutable), *alinga* (without marks), *amūrta* (formless), *anādi* (without beginning), *ananta* (endless), *anirvāchya* (indescribable), *arūpa* (formless), *asat* (non-being), *avigraha* (bodiless, incorporeal), *avināshī* (indestructible), *avyakta*

(unmanifested), *avyaya* (imperishable), *nirañjana* (without stain – free from *māyā*), *nirālamba* (without dependence, alone), *nirākāra* (formless), *niratishaya* (unsurpassed), *niravadya* (blameless), *nirdosha* (faultless), *nirguṇa* (without attributes), *nirmala* (without impurity), *nirvisesha* (undifferentiated) and *nishkala* (without part *i.e.* without limbs).

Brahman is also said to be: *eka* (one, unique), *nitya* (eternal), *sanātana* (eternal), *sarvagata* (omnipresent), *sarvaga* (all-pervading), *sarvajña* (omniscient), *sarvashaktimān* (omnipotent), *satya* (truth), *shiva* (benevolent), *svayambhū* (self-existent) and *vibhu* (all-pervading).

Although the thought or idea of *Brahman* is not *Brahman* Itself, some idea of the nature of *Brahman* may be grasped from the above. *Brahman* is said to be One. There exists nothing but the one Reality. The diversity of creation is projected out of *Brahman*, but *Brahman* remains *Brahman*. There is nothing other than *Brahman*. It is all-pervading, immortal, infinite, omnipresent and omniscient. It is formless, attributeless and without imperfection. It sees without eyes; It hears without ears. It is of unthinkable power. It is bliss itself. It is the supreme Soul.

Brahman, the super Soul *(Adhyātman)* or the supreme Soul *(Paramātmā),* is the object of that profound meditation practised through the ages by Hindu sages and holy men of pure mind and intellect. Their sole goal has been complete absorption into and unity with *Brahman*. As it says in the *Upanishads:*

> He who knows the supreme *Brahman,*
> he indeed becomes *Brahman.*
>
> *Muṇḍaka Upanishad 3:2.9*

And:

> The knower of *Brahman* attains the Supreme.
>
> *Taittirīya Upanishad 2:1.3*

For the common man, however, it is hard to understand and realize the unmanifested form of *Brahman, i.e.* the *nirguṇa Brahman,* the sublime and undifferentiated *Brahman* with neither attributes nor qualities. The concept of God held by most people is not that of *Brahman,* the absolute Godhead, but divinity in an anthropomorphic form. They think of God in concrete terms, *i.e.* as *saguṇa* (with attributes or qualities). Thus, Hindus relate more easily to the deities *Brahmā, Vishṇu* and *Shiva* than to the formless absolute Reality of *Brahman.*

In the course of divine emanation, the oneness of *Brahman* became the many by an act of willing. Figuratively, He is said to have uttered the formula:

May I be many; may I grow forth!

Chhāndogya Upanishad 6:2.3, U4 p.295; cf. Taittirīya Upanishad 2:6, U4 p.51

This utterance symbolizes the growth into existence of the many-faceted creation by means of His Creative Word, the *Om* of the *Upanishads*. After having created it, *Brahman* is not absent from it, but dwells in the heart of all creatures as their inner self.[7] Having brought the world into being, *Brahman* sustains it and, ultimately, reabsorbs it. The *Chhāndogya Upanishad* speaks of *Brahman* as *tajjallān (tad + ja + la + an):* that *(tad)* by which the world is born *(ja)*, into which it is dissolved *(la)* and by which it is vitalized *(an)*.[8] *Brahman* is therefore said to be the Creator *(Brahmā)*, the Preserver *(Vishṇu)* and the Destroyer *(Shiva)*, all contained in one.

Brahman, then, in Its unconditioned pure essence, is portrayed as the transcendent Absolute, the supreme Self. As reflected in the body, it is the true, enduring part of the individual self: the soul or *ātman*.

Brahm *as the Supreme Lord*

Bearing in mind the traditional usage in Indian sacred literature, many Indian Saints and mystics have used *Brahm* as a name for the supreme Lord:

God *(Brahm)* shines bright as the pole star:
His splendour is spread behind the inner veil.

Dariyā Sāhib, Gyān Svarodaya, Chaupaī 124, DG2 p.257

Within every heart is hid the Lord *(Brahm)*,
and in all the hearts and bodies is His light.

Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 597, MMS

As the ray blends with the sun, and water becomes water,
so merges the human light in the supreme Light, and becomes perfect.
Now I see the Lord *(Brahm)*, hear of the Lord *(Brahm)*,
and narrate but the one Lord.
The supreme Soul *(Ātam)* is the creator of the world:
without the Lord, I know no other.

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 846, MMS

And:

You are perfect, my Lord *(Brahm):*
take me to Your perfect place *(pūraṇ pad)*.
I am restless with the pain of separation,
says Mīrā, make me Yours.

Mīrābāī, Shabdāvalī, Shabd 12:7, MBS p.7

Similarly, in a passage involving a play on the words *brāhmaṇ* (the Hindu priestly class) and *Brahm* (God), Guru Amardās writes:

> If he knows the supreme Lord and walks in the true *Guru*'s will,
> then alone is he a *brāhmaṇ*.
> They within whose mind the Lord abides
> are rid of the ailment of self-conceit.
> They utter Lord's praises, amass virtues,
> and their soul blends with the supreme Soul (*jotī Jot*, Light of lights).
> In this age, rare are the *brāhmaṇs*
> who think of their Lord *(Brahm)* with fixed attention.
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 849–50, MMS*

Brahm ***as Lower than the Supreme***

A number of Indian Saints have indicated that the *Brahm* described in the *Upanishads* and subsequently in *yoga* and *Vedānta* is below the highest level they have known. Nāmdev (*c.*1270–1350), for instance, says that he has experienced the ultimate goal of *yoga* – knowledge of *Brahm* – and he has also gone beyond that:

> I have churned the six schools of philosophy,
> and extracted their essence;
> I have learnt the ultimate goal of the *yogīs* and ascetics,
> and known the joy of merging in *Brahm.*
> Through the grace of the Saints, says Nāma,
> I have transcended all of that.
>
> *Nāmdev, Gāthā 2026, SNG p.768; cf. SN p.124, SNO p.40*

Likewise, Kabīr writes that "all the lights of the world put together, fade with shame before the light of the region of *Brahm.*" But he adds that his spiritual homeland lies:

> Beyond that, beyond,
> in the realm of the Inaccessible *(Agam),* the Boundless *(Apār),*
> is the land where Kabīr lives –
> But only a devotee of the *Guru* will,
> through love, reach my home.
>
> *Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 1, Bhed Bānī 7:4, KSS1 p.59*

Tukārām (*b.c.*1598) also indicates that the Saints know of stages beyond the "knowledge of *Brahm*":

Waste no time on yogic practices,
  nor resort to renunciation;
Tread the golden path of devotion,
  in company with the Saints.
Do not get involved in religious ceremonies,
  nor be concerned with the knowledge of *Brahm*.
Make the Lord's glory your ladder of ascent.
This secret has been revealed by Saints, O Tukā;
Besides this, there is no other path to eternal peace.

Tukārām, Gāthā 3113, STG p.520

Tulsī Sāhib (*c.*1763–1843) is explicit when he says that while "The world hails *Brahm* as the supreme Lord," in fact, "They all are deluded." His description of the various beliefs concerning *Brahm* as *nirguṇ* (without attributes) indicates that he is referring to the *Brahman* of *Vedānta* and the *Upanishads:*

The nameless One *(Anāmī)* has been realized by Saints alone;
They have called Him *Sat Purush* (true Lord), *Sat Nām* (true Name).
The one without attributes *(nirguṇ)* has emanated from *Sat Nām:*
  this mystery is revealed by the Saints....
Not knowing the reality, people have described *Brahm*
  as the one without attributes *(nirguṇ)* – formless and infinite,
  and also, as the dispenser of justice, and free from delusion....
The ignorant attribute these qualities to *Brahm,*
  and him the world worships with all devotion.

The ten incarnations come from *Brahm,*
  and the world looks upon him as *nirguṇ.*
He, in turn, has created the physical and astral worlds,
  with seven islands and nine divisions of the world.
Thus, the world hails *Brahm* as the supreme Lord,
  it recognizes not the path leading to the Ultimate.

Time and again, I have shown the way to attain this truth,
  but no one in the world had the sense to comprehend it.
I unravelled the mystery of the Saints' path;
No one, however, believes my words –
  the preachers of Kāshī, the learned, the ritualists,
  the *yogīs,* the *paramhaṃsas* (great souls) and the celibates, too –
Not one of them, says Tulsī, knows the secret.
They all are deluded in futile practices.

Tulsī Sāhib, Ghaṭ Rāmāyaṇ 1, Chaupaī 10–11, 13–21, GR1 p.73

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh (1818–1878), successor to Tulsī Sāhib, is specific in his designation of *Brahm*. He says that *Brahm* is the creator and ruler of the worlds of the mind. He is referring to the sublime, extremely subtle and transcendent lord or ruler of the universal mind, the source of multiplicity and diversity in the lower creation, including the three *guṇas* (attributes) and all the pairs of opposites. According to him, this realm is the second stage of the creation, also called *trikuṭī*. The first stage, lying above the physical universe *(piṇḍa)*, is *sahans dal kanwal:*

> There are two minds, *brahmāṇḍī* (universal) and *piṇḍī* (individual). The former has its seat in *trikuṭī* and *sahans dal kanwal*, and is called *Brahm*.... When the *surat* (soul) reaches its real home in *sat lok* (true region), beyond the regions of the *brahmāṇḍī* mind, it will break all bonds – whether causal, subtle or gross, physical, sensual or mental.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Prose 1:8, SB p.7*

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh also equates the "region of *trikuṭī*" with "the region of *Praṇav, Brahm* or *Onkār*".[9] The stage beyond this, he calls *pārbrahm* (beyond *Brahm*). In another passage, he says that "what the *Vedas* call the limitless *Brahm*" is "but a drop" of the Divine, adding, "Vedantists ... have not found the secret of the realms beyond."[10]

Mahārāj Sāwan Singh (1858–1948) and Mahārāj Charan Singh (1916–1990), following Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, have also depicted *Brahm* in the same way as their predecessor:

> *Brahm* is the presiding power of the second grand division of creation, and this is the ideal and goal of Vedantists, who know nothing beyond that. By degrees, as you advance, you will realize the relative position of all these powers.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, The Dawn of Light 80, DOL p.215*

> *Brahm* ... is the second stage according to *Sant Mat* (Teachings of the Saints). *Sant Mat* takes you to the fifth stage.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Spiritual Gems 10, SG p.17*

They, too, say that *Brahm* is the source of the mind:

> Unless the mind withdraws its attention from the nine doors (of the body), and peacefully settles down in the thinking centre or eye centre, it cannot reach its true home, which is *trikuṭī*, the region of *Brahm*, from where it came down into this world. And so long as the mind does not return to its home, the soul also, which is so firmly

> knotted to it in this world, cannot reach its destination, far beyond that of mind.
>
> *Mahārāj Charan Singh, Light on Sant Mat, Discourse 6, LOSM pp.50–51*

The soul can only attain liberation from birth and death when it goes beyond *Brahm,* which is the source of the mind:

> Salvation from birth and death is attained when the soul reaches *trikuṭī, Brahm,* and the mind merges back into the universal mind. Salvation for a soul is when it merges back into the supreme Father, its own origin.
>
> *Mahārāj Charan Singh, The Master Answers 369, MA p.393*

It is because the mind and *māyā* of *Brahm* are so subtle that many have taken *Brahm* to be the Ultimate:

> In *trikuṭī,* the *nij man* (innermost or causal mind), or *Brahm,* or the universal mind, cover the spirit. The forms here are made of very pure *māyā,* so much so that a majority of the seekers have failed to see here the spirit apart from *māyā* or mind, and therefore considered *Brahm* as all-pervading, etc.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Spiritual Gems 20, SG p.27*

These mystics have also identified the lord of the regions up to *trikuṭī,* as *Kāl* (*lit.* Time, hence, Death), and have equated *Kāl* with *Brahm,* as the origin of time, the architect of birth and death, and the source of the mind:

> *Kāl* is not only the lord of this physical world, but of all the worlds below and above and surrounding it, up to *trikuṭī.* His technical Hindu name is *Brahm.* He rules over *trikuṭī* and *sahans dal kanwal* and all the regions below them. He is with every creature in the shape of mind.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Spiritual Gems 120, SG p.177*

Kāl or *Brahm,* however, is simply fulfilling the role allotted to him by God:

> The entire creation – the regions, islands, nether worlds and everything that exists – has been created by the Supreme Being, and it is He who has entrusted its administration to *Kāl. Kāl*'s authority reaches up to the level of *Brahm,* (extending) throughout the realm of the three worlds. Whatever comes within his sphere is caught in the pain of death and rebirth.
>
> *Mahārāj Charan Singh, Spiritual Discourses 2:4, SD2 p.159*

See also: **Brahmā** (4.2), **nirguṇa** (2.2).

1. *Taittirīya Upanishad* 2:1.1.
2. *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* 2:1.20, 2:3.6.
3. *Nṛisiṃha Uttara Tāpinīya Upanishad* 7; *Rāma Uttara Tāpinīya Upanishad* 2.
4. *Sarva Upanishad* 21.
5. *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* 2:3.6, 3:9.26, 4:2.4, 4:4.22, 4:5.15.
6. *Brahma Sūtras* 3:2.17.
7. *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad* 3:2.
8. *Chhāndogya Upanishad* 3:14.1.
9. Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, *Sār Bachan Prose* 1:14, *SB* p.11.
10. Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, *Sār Bachan Poetry* 26:1.30, 33, *SBP* p.216.

ch'áng (cháng) (C) *Lit.* eternal, permanent, constant; that which is perpetual, unchanging and always true; in a mystic sense, the universal law or principle of permanence, *Tào,* which is the power underlying the physical universe of changing phenomena:

> There was something formed out of chaos,
> That was born before Heaven and Earth.
> Quiet and still! Pure and Deep!
> It stands on Its own and doesn't change *(ch'áng).*
> It can be regarded as the Mother of Heaven and Earth.
> I do not yet know Its name.
> I style It 'the Way *(Tào)*'.
>
> *Lǎo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 25, LTTC p.236*

Lǎo Tzu also uses *ch'áng* to hint at a certain equilibrium of mind that is necessary for a person seeking Truth, an experience of that which is real and permanent:

> To return to your fate is to be constant *(ch'áng);*
> To know the constant *(ch'áng)* is to be wise.
> Not to know the constant *(ch'áng)* is to be reckless and wild;
> If you're reckless and wild, your actions will lead to misfortune.
>
> *Lǎo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 16, LTTC p.68*

From the time of Wáng Pì (225–249 CE), one of the earliest and most well known commentators on the *Tào Té Chīng, ch'áng* has been acknowledged as fundamentally descriptive of *Tào. Ch'áng* is also used synonymously with the term *héng* (forever) in the *Tào Té Chīng* to describe that which is perma-

nent, which is constantly or forever nameless.[1] In common usage, *héng* generally adds a sense of increased endurance or everlastingness, as in the compound term, *yǔng héng* (abiding forever).

Most versions of the *Tào Té Chīng* use *ch'áng* for permanence, while the oldest extant version of the *Tào Té Chīng,* dated to between 206 and 195 BCE, discovered in 1973 in a tomb in Mă Wáng Tuī in China, uses *héng*. Even so, regardless of any minor differences between the two terms, they are often used interchangeably to describe that which is permanent and eternal.

See also: **Tào** (2.2).

1. Lǎo Tzu, *Tào Té Chīng* 1, 32.

chhap lok (H) *Lit.* hidden *(chhap)* region *(lok),* the hidden abode; a term often used by Dariyā Sāhib of Bihar for the eternal realm, said to be hidden because it is concealed by a cloak of illusion from those who inhabit the lower realms:

> The soul is like a bird perched on the branch
> of an immortal, wondrous Tree in the hidden realm *(chhap lok).*
> But, in delusion, it has fallen into this ocean of existence.
> *Dariyā Sāhib, Gyān Svarodaya, Chaupaī 76–77, DG2 p.254*

And:

> The hidden abode *(chhap lok)* is above all other realms:
> those who reach there obtain nectar, for all eternity.
> Utmost peace do those pure souls *(haṃsas)* enjoy,
> and in great bliss do they live.
> Drinking nectar in the hidden realm *(chhap lok),*
> their age-long hunger is satisfied.
> *Dariyā Sāhib, Dariyā Sāgar, Sākhī 60, Chaupaī 712, DG2 p.71*

city of God, city of the Living God, city of Truth Eternity, the eternal realm of God, often symbolized in Judaic and Christian writings as the heavenly Jerusalem or Mount Zion. The term appears in *Zechariah,* where the meaning is ambiguous. The reference could be either to eternity or to the Jerusalem of this world:

> Thus says the Lord:
> "I have returned to Zion,
> and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem;

> And Jerusalem shall be called the city of Truth,
> and the mountain of the Lord of Hosts, the holy mountain."
>
> *Zechariah 8:3, JCL*

But in the *Psalms,* it clearly refers to God's eternity:

> His foundation is in the holy mountains.
> The Lord loves the gates of Zion
> more than all the dwellings of Jacob.
> Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God.
>
> *Psalm 87:1–3, JCL*

And:

> There is a river, whose streams make glad the city of God,
> the holiest dwelling place of the Most High.
> God is in the midst of her (the city):
> she shall not be moved;
> God shall help her before morning.
>
> *Psalm 46:5, 6, JCL*

Although the "city of God" is generally understood as eternity, Philo Judaeus, the first-century Greek-speaking Jew of Alexandria, provides two alternative interpretations of the latter psalm. Firstly, he points out that in this context the "city" cannot be Jerusalem, for there is no "river" near Jerusalem. He then goes on to suggest that the "city of God" is the creation, which is gladdened and sustained by the continuous "stream" of the "divine *Logos*":

> For indeed the stream of the divine *Logos* continually flowing on with its swift and ordered current, does overflow and gladden the whole universe through and through.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, On Dreams II:37; cf. PCW5 pp.552–55, TGH1 p.245*

Alternatively, says Philo, the psalmist

> uses this name for the soul of the sage, in which God is said to walk as in a city. For "I will walk in you," He says, "and will be your God."[1]
>
> *Philo Judaeus, On Dreams II:37; cf. PCW5 pp.554–55, TGH1 p.245*

Here, the "city of God" and the "dwelling place of the Most High" refer to a God-realized soul, the true "sage" for, as many mystics have pointed out, God dwells within His Saints. This interpretation does have the advantage of making sense of the line, "God shall help her (the city) before morning."

"Before morning" refers to the hour of God's favour, a frequent allusion in Jewish spiritual literature to the early hours of the morning, when the vibrations of the world are stilled and the devotees keep awake in their prayer and meditation, seeking spiritual refreshment from the flowing waters of the *Logos.*

Philo's explanation, however, ingenious though it is, stands on its own, and the traditional interpretation of the "city of God" remains that of the divine eternity. It is in this sense that the term appears in the New Testament, as in *Hebrews:*

> Ye are come unto mount Zion,
> and unto the city of the Living God,
> the heavenly Jerusalem.
>
> *Hebrews 12:22, KJV*

Similarly, in the *Book of Revelation:*

> And he (an angel) carried me away in the spirit
> to a great and high mountain,
> and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem,
> descending out of heaven from God,
> having the glory of God:
> And her light was like unto a stone most precious,
> even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.
>
> *Book of Revelation 21:10–11, KJV*

Later mystics also spoke of the "heavenly Jerusalem", as does Marina de Escobar (1554–1633) in a passage where she is clearly referring to the heavenly realms:

> The angels approached my soul and detached her from the sensible faculties (withdrew her from the body). I found myself before the heavenly Jerusalem which was encircled by an exceedingly vast river, of great beauty and brightness.
>
> *Marina de Escobar, Life, VME1 III:1, in GIP p.274*

See also: **Jerusalem**.

1. *Leviticus* 26:12.

cloud (He. *'anan*) Metaphorically, the divine and holy presence. According to the biblical story, during the Israelites' wanderings in the desert, God's presence is manifested to them as a "pillar of cloud":

> *Yahweh* went before them, by day in the form of a pillar of cloud to show them the way, and by night in the form of a pillar of fire to give them light; thus, they could continue their march by day and by night. The pillar of cloud never failed to go before the people during the day, nor the pillar of fire during the night.
>
> *Exodus 13:21–22, JB*

Later, when the Temple at Jerusalem was being built, the divine presence is again described as appearing like a cloud. The term expresses the pervasive and intangible quality of God. In biblical usage, it parallels the term 'glory', also used to express the radiant, immanent presence of God that 'dwells' in the creation:

> And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, and that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord.
>
> *1 Kings 8:10–11, JCL*

In the language of one of the later prophets, here thanking God for freeing the people from their slavery in Egypt:

> And you did lead them with a pillar of cloud by day,
> and with a pillar of fire by night,
> to light for them the way on which they should walk.
>
> *Nehemiah 9:12, JCL*

Mystically, the vision of God appearing in a cloud, fire and radiant 'glory', from which His voice emanates, all point to the inner experience of God's presence. The Bible was written down long after the events described in it were presumed to have taken place, and numerous authors were involved in its writing. It is thus possible that what was originally a description of an inner spiritual experience got transmuted into an external experience of God's presence.

See also: **pillar of cloud** (▸2), **Shekhinah** (▸2).

countenance of God, face of God, presence of God (He. *panayyim,* plural of the unused singular noun, *paneh*); terms used in the Hebrew Bible to convey the idea of being in the presence of God, particularly pertaining to the prophets' inner mystic vision of God:

And Elijah said:
"As the Lord of Hosts lives,
before whose face *(le-phanav)* I stand...."

1 Kings 18:15; cf. KB

"The light of Thy countenance *(aur panekha)*" is an allied biblical expression referring to the spiritual light emanating from God; *i.e.* God manifesting as spiritual light:

Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance *(aur panekha)* upon us.

Psalm 4:6, KJV

Similarly, the devotees are called 'those who seek Thy countenance *(mevakshei panekha)*' or those who "behold His face *(yeḥezu panemo)*":

For the Lord is righteous *(ẓaddik)*,
He loves righteousness *(ẓeddakot)*;
The upright shall behold His face *(yeḥezu panemo)*.

Psalm 11:7, KB

See also: **Shekhinah** (▸2), **wajh**.

country (of peace and happiness) See **land**.

Crown An ornamental headdress, usually made of gold and embedded with precious stones, worn by sovereigns as a mark of their position; also, a garland of flowers and/or greenery, worn on festive occasions such as marriages.

The term is used particularly in Semitic cultures for the Godhead. In the writings of the Mandaeans, for instance, a gnostic sect with Semitic origins, dating from the early or even pre-Christian era, is found:

The Crown (Godhead) is composed of four mysteries,
which are the Wellspring and Date Palm,
Fecundity, Glory and Light.

Thousand and Twelve Questions I:19; cf. TTQ p.117

In other places, the Crown is the creative Power of God. In one of the gnostic texts, a mystical interpretation is given to a passage from the *Song of Songs* that speaks of the diadem with which Solomon was crowned by his "mother (the creative Power) ... on his marriage day, the day of his joy":[1]

> Because of this work (of salvation by the Son), the Father of the All (the creation), the indescribable One, sent a Crown in which is the Name of the All, whether endless, or unutterable, or incomprehensible, or imperishable, or unknowable, or still, or all-powered, or indivisible. This is the Crown of which it is written: "It was given to Solomon on the day of the joy of his heart."[2]
>
> *Untitled Text 250:12, BC pp.262–63*

The term is an integral part of Jewish mysticism, particularly the Kabbalah. *Keter* (Crown), for instance, is the highest *sefirah* (emanation), the first subtle emanation of the divine Essence, the first stirrings of the creative process within the Godhead.

See also: **Keter**.

1. *Song of Songs* 3:11.
2. *Song of Songs* 3:11.

dār (A/P), **dār al-ākhirah**, **dār al-baqā'**, **dār al-fanā'**, **dār al-qarār** (A), **dār-i ākhirah**, **dār-i baqā'**, **dār-i fanā'**, **dār-i qarār** (P) *Dār* means house, building, structure, edifice, dwelling, abode, residence, home. *Dār al-baqā'* is the eternal *(baqā')* abode, the hereafter; *dār al-fanā'* is the abode of annihilation *(fanā')*, extinction of the sense of individual self, the stage of *fanā'* on the Sufi's spiritual journey; *dār al-qarār* is the home that will last or endure, regarded as one of the eight paradises; *dār al-ākhirah* is the last or final dwelling, the home of the hereafter *(ākhirah)*. The *Qur'ān* says:

> The life of this world *(al-dunyā)*
> is naught but a sport and a diversion.
> Surely the home in the hereafter *(dār al-ākhirah)*,
> is better for those who are righteous.
> What! Do you not understand?
>
> *Qur'ān 6:32*

And:

> O my people!
> This life of the present is nothing but (temporary) convenience:
> It is the hereafter *(al-ākhirah)*
> that is the home that will last *(dār al-qarār)*.
>
> *Qur'ān 40:39, AYA*

The *Qur'ān* also advises "seek death" – intended either as encouragement to pass through the gates of death in meditation, thus entering the next world while still living in the physical body, or as an exhortation not to fear death, since (for those who have led good lives), it is a transition to a better world:

> If the last home *(dār al-ākhirah)* with *Allāh*
> be for you specially, and not for anyone else,
> then seek death, if you are sincere.
>
> *Qur'ān 2:94; cf. AYA*

See also: **abode**, **al-ākhirah**, **'ālam** (4.1), **ḍerā**, **dhām**, **al-dunyā** (6.2).

dār al-salām (A/P) *Lit.* abode *(dār)* of peace *(salām)*. *Dār al-salām* is a name of paradise used in the *Qur'ān*[1] because it is a place of peace and refuge from the transitory world; also, one of the eight paradises mentioned in Sufi literature in which angels are said to greet *(salām)* the new arrivals.

See also: **Jerusalem**.

1. *Qur'ān* 6:127.

darbār (P/U/H/Pu) (pl. Pu. *darbāran*) *Lit.* court, especially a royal court; a hall of audience, a meeting hall, a gathering. Since the Lord is commonly referred to as the King or Sovereign, mystics have also spoken of the court *(darbār)* of the Lord *(Sāhib)*, referring to the presence of God or to the focus of the devotee's attention:

> Of all the courts *(darbāran)*, Thine is the true court *(darbār)*,
> and, amongst the protection givers, Thou art the supreme.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 507, MMS*

Darbār has also been used in reference to the presence of a Master, and in other contexts such as the *darbār* of the *Dharam Rāi* (lord of death).

See also: **darbār** (▸2).

daryā (P/Pu) *Lit.* sea, ocean; also, in Punjabi, river; mystically, the all-encompassing, boundaryless oneness of God; the pure, uncreated, divine Essence. Thus, 'Aṭṭār describes God as a sea of unity *(daryā-yi vaḥdat)*:

All are divers in the sea of unity *(daryā-yi vaḥdat).*
Many they may be, but in essence they are one pearl.

'Aṭṭār, in FLI p.384

Muḥammad Dārā Shikoh portrays created beings as drops of the Creator, the divine ocean:

A drop is a drop, so long as it does not realize that it is one with the ocean *(daryā),* but thinks himself separate from it. The creature *(bandah)* is a creature, so long as he does not know himself to be a Creator *(Khudā).*

Muḥammad Dārā Shikoh, Risālah-i Ḥaqq Numā, COT p.26

You who seek God everywhere, truly you are that God, not separate from Him. This search of yours is just like the search of the drop for the ocean *(daryā),* when it is already in the midst of the waters of the ocean *(daryā).*

Muḥammad Dārā Shikoh, Risālah-i Ḥaqq Numā, COT p.27

Sufis often express the oneness of the perfect Man, the Saint or prophet, and God using the imagery of a wave arising out of the sea. In this context, Shāh Ni'mat Allāh Valī observes:

Although movements of the sea *(daryā)* are called waves,
in reality, waves are identical with the sea *(daryā).*

Shāh Ni'mat Allāh Valī, in FLI p.383

Adopted into Punjabi, the term also appears in the *Ādi Granth:*

Thou art the river *(daryā),* all-knowing and all-seeing:
how can I, a fish, find Thy limit?

Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 25, MMS

Thou art the river *(daryā),* and all are within Thee:
beside Thee, there is no one else.

Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 11, MMS

See also: **baḥr**.

dasht-i 'Adam (P) *Lit.* desert *(dasht)* of Nonexistence *('Adam);* a Sufi term for the vast expanse of eternity, beyond the existence of the creation; also called *ṣaḥrā-yi 'Adam* and *ṣaḥrā-yi Nīstī,* both meaning the desert of Nonexistence.

In Sufi thought, God is Nonexistence and the creation is existence. Though God is invisible to human eyes, yet He is real and the creation unreal. Rūmī says:

> There is no place of rest
> but the desert of Nonexistence *(dasht-i 'Adam)*;
> For existence *(vujūd)* has no faithfulness.
> *Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz 2769:29440, KSD6 p.95, KDS2 p.1028, in SPL p.178*

And he exhorts the spiritual seeker to go there:

> Go to the desert of Nonexistence *(ṣaḥrā-yi 'Adam)*,
> go to the garden of Iram (paradise)!
> For you will find no wine without dregs
> within the sphere of time.
> *Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz 2373:25091, KSD5 p.153, KDS2 p.884; cf. in SPL p.317*

The "garden of Iram" was a fabulous garden said to have been created by al-Shaddād ibn 'Ād in the desert of 'Adan, in southern Arabia, as a rival to the celestial paradise, and named Iram after his great grandfather. On going to take possession of it, al-Shaddād and all those with him were struck dead by a sound from the heavens, and the garden disappeared.[1] The legend is mentioned in the *Qur'ān*.[2] Perhaps Rūmī is likening the "desert of Nonexistence" to the "paradise of Iram" because the real "paradise of Iram" is not earthly, but is reached by dying to this world on hearing the divine Music that lifts the soul to eternity.

See also: **desert** (6.2), **hast** (2.2), **nīst** (2.2).

1. T.P. Hughes, in "Iram", *Dictionary of Islam, DOI* p.215.
2. *Qur'ān* 89:7–8.

dātā (H/Pu), **dātār** (Pu) *Lit.* giver, donor, benefactor, provider, a generous person; an epithet of God as the beneficent and munificent Giver of everything:

> Why praise the created one?
> Praise thou Him, who creates all.
> Nānak, without the one Lord, there is not another donor *(dātā)*.
> Praise thou the Creator-Lord, who has created the universe.
> Eulogise thou the beneficent Lord (*Dātā*, the Giver),
> who gives sustenance to all.
> *Guru Angad, Ādi Granth 1238–39, MMS*

Seek from the Lord just Him alone,
for with the Lord, the giver *(dātā),* come His gifts.

Sardār Bahādur Jagat Singh, in DPS p.259

He (man) loves gifts *(dāt)* and forgets the Giver *(Dātār).*

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 676, MMS

The term is also used for the *Satguru* (true Master).

See also: **dātā** (▸2).

Date Palm, Palm Tree The date palm *(Phoenix dactylifera)* is a tall species of feather palm, originally a native of Syria, but grown in tropical and subtropical climates for its sweet, nutritious fruit. A palm tree is any member of the family *Palmacea,* characterized by a straight, unbranched trunk with a cluster of pinnate or palmate leaves at the top.

Like the Vine and the Tree of Life, the metaphors of the palm tree and the date palm were used to mean either God Himself, the Word as the Tree of Life, or the individual soul, depending upon the context.

In Mandaean sacred writings, the date palm is used as a symbol of God and His creation, together with the image of the wellspring of Living Waters. Just as there can be no physical life in the desert without water and dates, so too is there no spiritual life without the living Wellspring and divine Date Palm:

Praised be the great first Wellspring and Date Palm,
for the Date Palm is the Father.

Thousand and Twelve Questions I:4, TTQ p.110

And also:

The great First Palm Tree was blessed,
and the Palm Tree blessed the bursting forth of its foliage.
It was so, and the sprouting branches blessed runnels (of sap),
and established them,
and established the Waters of Life.

Mandaean Prayer Book 376, CPM p.271

From the "First Palm Tree" or the "Date Palm" of the Father arise the foliage and branches of creation, established by the "runnels" of sap or the "Waters of Life" that sustain them.

The Date Palm is also used as an image alongside the Vine, symbolizing both God and the many branches of His creation. *Shīshlam-Rba* is a mythical,

Mandaean patriarch, here seeming to symbolize the Saviour:

> On the day that *Shīshlam-Rba*
> shook out the banner of *Pirūn* (the mystic Vine),
> unfurling it at the head of the worlds *(shkinata),*
> its glory shone out over the Wellspring and Palm Tree.
>
> When the Wellspring and Palm Tree
> beheld the glory of *Shīshlam-Rba*'s banner,
> a gush of radiance inundated *Shīshlam-Rba*'s banner
> and made his banner, *Pirūn,* bright beyond measure.
>
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 333; cf. CPM p.234*

While the "Wellspring" is the source of the Living Water and the "Palm Tree" is the Father and supporter of all life, the True Vine or mystic Vine is here portrayed as the Living Water itself or the many-branched Tree of Life, the creative Power, giving life and 'sap' to the creation.

The date palm was also used as symbolic of the soul or of a human being. Sometimes, the shade of the palm or other trees symbolizes the spiritual protection of a mystic or prophet.

See also: **Tree of Life** (3.1), **Vine** (3.1).

Dayāl, Dayālu, Dayāl Prabhu, Dayāl Purush (H/Pu), **Dayāl Purakh, Dayāl Prabh** (Pu) *Lit.* the merciful or compassionate One *(Dayāl);* the merciful Lord or Being *(Dayāl Prabhu, Purush, Purakh);* the merciful God, the Lord of compassion; the merciful, gracious, kind, beneficent, compassionate Lord, who bestows knowledge of Himself through the mystic Name:

> O my merciful Master-God *(Dayāl Prabh),*
> ever grant me the gift of Thy Name's *(Nām)* meditation.
>
> *Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 91, MMS*

> O my beneficient Lord of compassion *(Dayāl Purakh),*
> my Master (*Prabh,* Lord):
> He alone realizes Thee, whom Thou so blesseth.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 563, MMS*

The nineteenth-century Tulsī Sāhib and his disciple and successor, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, both contrasted the merciful power *(Dayāl)* with the negative power *(Kāl),* whose rule is one of strict cause and effect or justice. Tulsī Sāhib says:

Kāl has fashioned the creation in such a way
that nobody knows the secret of *Dayāl Purush.*

Tulsī Sāhib, Shabdāvalī 1, Kakahrā 2, TSH1 p.24

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh explains the matter in greater detail, referring to *Dayāl* as *Akāl Purush* (timeless Being):

> He whom the Saints contemplate internally is ... *Akāl Purush.* People neglect the root and worship the branches, with the result that they do not get at the root, and the branches also wither. Worship of the branches was intended to lead eventually to the root, but people have caught hold of the branches so firmly that they cannot be induced to let them go. In other words, misled by the priesthood, they have taken to all sorts of worship and continue to do so.
>
> The reason is that the mind, which is the agent of *Kāl,* being always with the soul, is helpful when anyone expounds the religions of *Kāl,* for the domain of *Kāl* is not crossed; but when Saints proclaim the way of *Dayāl* (the Merciful), this representative of *Kāl,* the mind, misleads him and does not let him have faith in the words of the Saints.

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Prose 2:75, SB pp.68–69

And again:

Forgetting her true home,
the soul *(surat)* has taken *Kāl*'s region as her own.
Kāl has created the three worlds *(trilokī),*
while *Dayāl* has manifested the true region *(sat lok)* as His own.
The three worlds are of *Kāl*'s domain,
the fourth region is the realm of *Dayāl.*

Kāl deludes the souls *(jīvas),*
and prevents them from attaining the fourth region.
Kāl does not disclose the secrets of *Dayāl Purush,*
he keeps souls shackled in external rituals.
Kāl preaches the worship of himself in various ways,
the souls thus remain bound to the wheel of eighty-four....
Kāl has encompassed everyone,
no one seems to search for *Dayāl.*
Kāl displays his mighty craft
and souls are following his path.

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 38:11.3–8, 18–19, SBP pp.349–50

He therefore says:

> Know all paths *(mat)* of the world to be those of *Kāl;*
> It is the path *(mat)* of the true Name and the true Lord,
>   that belongs to *Dayāl.*
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 11:1:71, SBP p.101*

It is only when *Dayāl* Himself takes a direct interest in a soul (so to speak), that an individual becomes ready to hear, understand and accept the teachings of a true Saint or mystic. Otherwise, all souls follow wherever their mind leads them:

> Compassion surged in the merciful Lord *(Dayāl Purush):*
>   in the form of Saints, He appeared in the world.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 22:1:21, SBP p.187*

See also: **dīn dayāl**, **Kāl** (6.1), **raḥamim**, **al-Raḥīm**, **al-Raḥmān**, **raḥum**.

Depth The eternal realm, the eternity of God; often as 'the Depth', a term found in early Middle Eastern mystic writings, especially those of the Manichaeans and gnostics:

> Who, my brethren, is worthy of all glory?
> The Father of Greatness is worthy of all glory,
>   the King, the God of Truth.
> He of the Height on high,
>   He of the unfathomable Depth;
> He of the crowns that fall not,
>   He of the garlands that do not wither.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.133*

In one of the gnostic treatises, it is said that the soul who is treading the mystic path, "learns about her Depth", meaning the divine Source lying deep within her:

> She learns about her light, as she goes about stripping off this world, while her true garment clothes her within, and her bridal clothing is placed upon her in beauty of mind, not in pride of flesh. And she learns about her Depth and runs into her fold, while her shepherd stands at the door. In return for all the shame and scorn, then, that she received in this world, she receives ten thousand times the grace and glory.
>
> *Authoritative Teaching 32, NHS11 pp.280–81*

Sometimes, the depth refers to the physical universe, as in the *Acts of Thomas,*[1] and in expressions such as the 'depths of the abyss' and so on. Conversely, terms such as the Hebrew *Ayn-Sof* (the Infinite) are also translated as the 'Abyss'.

See also: **Ayn-Sof**.

1. *Acts of Thomas* 37, 99, 123, *ANT* pp.382, 408, 419.

ḍerā (H/Pu) *Lit.* home, dwelling, dwelling place, abode; tent, halting place, quarters; either temporary or permanent, depending on the context; mystically, the soul's true home in eternity, rather than this world:

> This is not thy abode *(ḍerā):*
> know that place where thy abode *(ḍerā)* is.
> Know thou by *Guru*'s instruction (*Shabd,* Word),
> the way to reach that abode *(ḍerā).*
> This dwelling *(ḍerā)* over here, one erects with toil,
> even a particle of which goes not with him.
> He on whom the perfect auspicious Master casts his gracious glance
> knows the worth of that dwelling *(ḍerā).*
> This dwelling *(ḍerā)* is permanent and true,
> and is obtained through the society of Saints.
> Nānak, those slaves who obtain it, waver not.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 256, MMS*

The term also appears in more general contexts, as in a passage where Dharamdās asks the Lord to make His home or dwelling in his heart:

> O emancipator and merciful Lord,
> make my heart Your dwelling *(ḍerā).*
> Have mercy on Dharamdās,
> and redeem him from the cycle of eighty-four *(chaurāsī).*
>
> *Dharamdās, Shabdāvalī, Binti 3:6, DDS p.18*

See also: **abode**, **dār**, **dhām**.

desh(a) (S/H) *Lit.* region, country, land; thus, territory, realm, world; mystically, a term either used in a general sense for the physical or other realms of creation or – as a suffix – for some particular inner region, such as *Kāl desh* (the region of *Kāl, trikuṭī*), *Dayāl desh* (the region of *Dayāl, sach khanḍ*), *sat desh* (the region of Truth), and so on. For instance:

Beyond the three worlds have I seen a wonderful land *(desh)*,
where there is neither form nor colour.

Kabīr, Akhrāvatī, Chaupaī 1:2, KSA p.3

And:

Only when the desire for foreign lands *(bidesh)* vanishes,
will you reach your own land *(desh)*.

Kabīr, Akhrāvatī, Chaupaī 33:7, KSA p.19

See also: **land**, **nij desh**.

Devatā, **Deva** (S/H), **Deo** (Pu) *Lit.* shining one; one who emits light; illuminator; hence, a deity, a divine being, a goddess; the luminous Lord; God. Hindu and Indian literature generally reserves the terms *devatā* and *deva* for lesser gods in the hierarchy of creation who live in the astral and higher heavenly regions. But since gods are believed to have bodies of light and God is regarded as the universal Light, the term has also been widely used for the Supreme Being:

The one resplendent God *(Deva)*
is hidden in all beings.

Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 6:11

God *(Deva)* is close to the worshipper, within his self:
ignoring Him, he is lost in external worship.

Dādū, Bānī 1, Parchā 258, DDB1 p.66

The luminous Lord *(Deo)* is the illuminator *(deo)* of the human soul:
with utter love, adore thou Him.

Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 1325, MMS

As the Supreme Being, *Deva* is sometimes used as *ādi Deva* (primal Lord) or *Devesha,* meaning lord *(īsha)* of the gods *(devas):*

O infinite One! Lord of the gods *(Devesha)*,
dwelling place of all the worlds!
You are the imperishable One, both being and nonbeing,
and that which is beyond them both!

You are the primal God *(ādi Deva)*,
the most ancient of Beings,
the ultimate haven of refuge for this world.

Bhagavad Gītā 11:37–38; cf. BGT

The term is also used for a *Satguru* (true Master).

See also: **deva** (4.2).

dhām(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* home, dwelling place, house, mansion, abode, residence, place; used by Indian mystics for any region of creation, including both this world and the eternal realm. The nineteenth-century mystic Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, for example, is referring to this world when he writes:

> O mind! Leave this place *(dhām)* of pleasure and pain.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 15:9.1, SBP p.119*

But he is speaking of the eternal realm when he says:

> O brother, turn now towards your true home *(dhām)*
> why live in a foreign land *(desh)?*
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 19:18.1, SBP p.152*

And:

> Through the grace of my dear Lord,
> I have found a home *(dhām)*
> where a wonderful Melody is ringing.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 3:1.52, SBP p.11*

Other mystics have used the word in a similar fashion:

> Nānak's supplication is:
> show Thy benediction and grant Thy Name *(Nām).*
> O God, the Lord-Master, eternal is whose mansion *(dhām),*
> unite me with Thee.
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 133, MMS*

See also: **abode, dār, ḍerā, nij dhām**.

Dhanī (H/Pu) *Lit.* one who has wealth *(dhan);* a rich, opulent or wealthy person; a man of property; hence, a lordly person, a ruler, a master, a husband; mystically, a name used for the lords or rulers of the inner realms, as well as the supreme Lord himself:

> Without my Master (*Dhanī,* Lord),
> I will burn in fire the silk and satin robes.

Says Nānak, with Thee, O my Spouse,
  I look beauteous, even when rolling in dust.
Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1425, MMS

Dhū al-'arsh (A), **Źū al-'arsh** (P) *Lit.* Lord *(Dhū)* of the throne *('arsh)*, an epithet of God.

See also: **'arsh**.

Dhur (H/Pu) *Lit.* high, highest, beyond, end; also, primal, pertaining to the beginning; also, the Highest, the Height, the Most High, the Ultimate; hence, used descriptively of the supreme Lord, the eternal region and the creative Power, as in *dhur desh* (highest land), *dhur dhām* (highest home), *Dhur kī Bāṇī* (Word from the Highest). The term is also used as an epithet of God:

From the primal One (*Dhur,* the Highest)
  has emanated the *Gurbāṇī* (*Bāṇī,* Word),
  and it has effaced all the anxiety.
Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 628, MMS

And:

I am the knower of the secret of the Highest *(Dhur):*
  I have brought the divine Commandment.
Anurāg Sāgar, ASDS p.14

dhur desh, dhur des, dhur dhām, dhur ghar, dhur pad (H/Pu) *Lit.* highest *(dhur)* country *(desh),* home *(dhām),* house *(ghar)* or place *(pad);* the eternal realm, the eternal home, eternity, the kingdom of heaven; the ultimate or primal Source:

Attaining the highest state *(dhur pad),*
  the soul merges into *Shabd,*
  shedding all its pride and avarice.
Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 37:16.10, SBP p.326

And:

No one is as powerful as the Master,
  he has revealed the secrets of the highest land *(dhur ghar).*
Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 28:6.5, SBP p.236

dīn dayāl (H/Pu) *Lit.* merciful *(dayāl)* to the meek or humble *(dīn)*; merciful to the spiritually poor or bereft; hence, merciful, all-merciful, compassionate; an appellation of God and the perfect Master. The mercy of the supreme Lord and His manifestation in a Master is commonly contrasted with the justice and law of cause and effect that pertains in this world. When souls in this world begin to realize their plight, then they automatically look to the supreme Lord for mercy and grace. The expression is common in mystic literature, as for instance:

> Since I heard that You are merciful to the poor *(dīn dayāl)*,
> the thought has settled in my heart.
> Where else, now, can I go,
> having immersed myself in Your love?
> *Malūkdās, Bānī, Kavitta 14:1, MDB p.28*

> In what way should I approach the Lord,
> who is so hard to reach,
> yet is merciful to the poor *(dīn dayāl)?*
> For I am trapped by the senses, with a very restless mind:
> indeed, I am a veritable blaze of passions.
> *Ravidās, Shrī Sant Rohidās, Pad 61:1, SSR p.178*

The term is also used as an epithet of the Divine:

> Listen, O Merciful to the Poor *(Dīn Dayāl)*,
> I relate my predicament to You and call out for help.
> It is because I know that You are the Almighty One,
> that I describe and explain my agony to You.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 33:8.4, SBP p.269*

See also: **Dayāl, gharīb-navāz**.

Dūst (P) *Lit.* friend, confidant, beloved; sweetheart, lover, mistress; in Sufi writings, the Lord; also, the spiritual Master, the *Pīr*, the *Shaykh* or *Murshid;* a particularly intimate term for friend, associated with the quality of *maḥabbah* (lovingkindness).

See also: **Beloved, Dūst** (▸2), **Ma'shūq, Prītam, Yār**.

dwelling place (He. *me'onah*) A place of residence; mystically, a biblical term for the eternity of God:

There is none like the God of Jeshurun,
who rides upon the heaven in your help,
and in His excellency on the sky.
The eternal God is your dwelling place *(me'onah)*,
and underneath are the everlasting arms.

Deuteronomy 33:26–27, JCL

See also: **abode**, **dār**, **ḍerā**, **dhām**, **dwellings** (4.1).

Ek(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* the number one; hence, unique, singular, alone, pre-eminent; often used in mystic literature for the One, the one Lord, the One without a second, the unique Source of all, God. In Punjabi, *Ek* is contrasted with *dūjā*, the second or other, signifying the duality and multiplicity of *māyā* and the creation. Used mystically, *Ek* is quite different from the mathematical number 'one'. Numbers are relative to each other, the One is absolute, without a second. The term appears in the *Upanishads:*

Being the One *(Eka)*,
the universal Soul is present within all beings.
Though one *(eka)*,
it is seen as many, like the moon in water.

Amṛita Bindu Upanishad 12; cf. MUM pp.22–23

And:

Know that Self *(Ātman)* alone who is one *(eka)*,
and give up all other talk.
This is the bridge to immortality.

Muṇḍaka Upanishad 2:2.5

Ek is also a common name for God in the *Ādi Granth:*

The embellishments befit the pious bride,
who, under the *Guru*'s instruction (*Shabd*, Word),
keeps her Groom enshrined in her heart.
Stilling her ego, she who realizes the one Lord (*Ek*, the One),
illustrious is said to be that bride.

Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 1277, MMS

See also: **dūjā** (6.2), **Ekankār**.

Ek Onkār (H/Pu), **Ekankār**, **Ekonkār** (Pu) *Lit.* the One *(Ek)* sound of *Om (Onkār);* the one primal Sound; an appellation of the Divine as the one Creator, the one God, the one Lord. *Ek* means one, while *Onkār* is the sound of *Om.*

Ekankār is the most sacred term in Sikhism. Although *Onkār* is derived differently by Sanskrit scholars, according to some Sikh scholars the derivation is from *ek* (one), plus *Om,* derived from the Sanskrit *av* (to protect, to please, to animate), plus *kār* from *ākār* (form, appearance). *Ekankār* is thus said to signify the one God manifested in the form of primal Sound, the divine creative power that brings everything into being and pervades the universe.

Ekankār appears at the beginning of the *Ādi Granth* and at the head of all sacred Sikh writings, just as *Om* is written at the head of sacred Hindu scriptures. It is an invocation of divine blessings:

> There is but one God *(Ekankār):*
> True is His Name, creative His personality,
> and immortal His form *(Sat Nām Kartā Purakh).*
> He is without fear, sans enmity,
> unborn and self-illumined.
> By the *Guru*'s grace, (He is obtained).
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1, MMS*

The term also appears in many other places in the *Ādi Granth:*

> He Himself is true, and true is all that He has made:
> from that Lord has originated the entire creation.
> When it pleases Him, then does He make the expanse:
> if it pleases Him, He becomes One alone *(Ekankār)....*
> Lord, the Creator, is contained in water, the land and the sky:
> in manifold ways, the one Lord *(Ekankār)* has diffused Himself,
> O Nānak.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 294, 296, MMS*

Ekankār is also used more specifically. In the Godhead, the highest Lord *(Anāmī, Rādhā Swāmī, Nirankār, Ādi Nirañjan,* etc.) is said to be actionless and separate or aloof from all. His creative process originates through His positive power or 'representative', sometimes designated *Ekankār* or *Sat Purush* (True Being). Thus, Bhāī Gurdās writes:

> The Formless *(Nirankār)* became manifest,
> and was called the infinite, the One primal Sound *(Ekankār).*
> On becoming manifest, the primal Sound *(Onkār),*
> with one utterance, created all.
>
> *Bhāī Gurdās, Vārān 39:2*

Such processes are beyond the grasp of words to depict, but Mahārāj Sāwan Singh does try to explain this process in greater detail:

> *Ādi Nirañjan* (the Primal Immaculate One) is actionless. He is separate from all. Whenever He wishes to create, He does so through His representative, *Ekankār* or *Sat Purush*. The Lord as the One is manifesting in manifold ways....
>
> Bhāī Gurdās says that the Absolute, who is *Ādi Nirañjan*, or the Lord, assumed the form of *Ekankār*, and created all the innumerable universes by His will.[1] ... The Lord or the Absolute manifested as *Sat Purush* (true Lord) or *Akāl Purush* (timeless Lord), and unfolded the universe. The region of *Ekankār* is beyond the reach of dissolution and grand dissolution....
>
> There are millions of *Brahm lokas*, or higher regions that work under the governance of *Brahms* who represent *Ekankār* and carry out His Orders, and revolve around Him being taken care of and sustained by Him. Saints obey the true Being. The *Brahms* have no control over the Saints. Saints, by initiating persons into the mystery of the Name of God, take them direct to *Sat Purush*.
>
> *Ekankār* is different from the *Onkār* of the *Vedas*. *Onkār* is the ruler of the three worlds, and his domains extend up to and include *trikuṭī*, the second spiritual region. *Ekankār* is *Akāl Purush* or *Sat Purush*. He is beyond *Kāl*, the negative power. *Kāl* merely supports this creation, but *Ekankār* is all pervading, and is the ruler of all the five regions.
>
> *Ekankār* can be realized through a true Master by remaining in His company. Attaining Him, doubts, perversions, delusions and egotism are destroyed. The mind comes under control and one swims across the ocean of phenomena.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Philosophy of the Masters 4; cf. PM4 pp.29–31*

See also: **Onkār**.

1. Bhāī Gurdās, *Vārān* 22:1, 39:2.

El (He) God; probably derived from the ancient Akkadian and Semitic language roots for 'power' or 'to be powerful'. *El* was head of a pantheon of gods espoused by the pre-Judaic Canaanite religion. In Canaanite epics, he is the Father of mankind and the Creator, but seldom figures actively in their mythology. He is also called 'the bull', signifying that he is the leader, the strong one. During the period 2500–1500 BCE, prior to the first beginnings of Judaism, *El* had declined in prominence. Nevertheless, he had remained

the active head of some local pantheons, also appearing as a prefix to other names of God, as in *Eloha* and *Elohim*.

In the Bible and other ancient Semitic texts, *El* is used as general term for God. *El* also appears as a part of the names of both people and angels, as in the biblical prophets and personalities Elijah, Ezekiel, Eliezer and the angel Gabriel. *El* may also be the root of the Arabic *Allāh*.

According to Canaanite mythology, when the other gods wanted to visit *El*, they had to journey to the region known as the "source of the two rivers, the fountain of the two deeps".[1] Although scholars have tried to locate this region in an earthly place – Aphaca (*lit.* fountain) – it can also be understood symbolically as a reference to the Godhead, the source of divine power or energy. Ancient Middle Eastern texts, including the Bible, commonly refer to God as the Fountain, Spring or Well from which flow the Living Water or the Water of Life. In the *Genesis* story, for instance, a river flows out of Eden (eternity) to water the garden "planted … in Eden" (the creation).[2] *El* thus represents the divine Fountain or Spring from which all life flows.

Medieval Jewish Kabbalists used a number of the names of God in a kind of repetition practice, which they called *hazkarat shemot* (remembrance of names). Each name was believed to describe a particular attribute of God or level of spirituality – a particular *sefirah* (emanation) in the series of *sefirot* through whose emanation the creation took place, according to the Kabbalah. *El* was understood to correspond to the *sefirah* of *Ḥesed* – the unbounded love and grace of the Divine.

See also: **Elohim**.

1. W.F. Albright, *Yahwe and the Gods of Canaan, YGC* p.120.
2. *Genesis* 2:8–10.

El 'Elyon (He) *Lit.* Exalted *('Elyon)* God *(El)*; the Highest of the High, the most Powerful of the Powerful, the Most High; a biblical name for God:

> I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,
> I will be like the Most High *(El 'Elyon)*.
>
> *Isaiah 14:14, KJV*

> I will praise the Lord according to His righteousness,
> and will sing praise
> to the name of the Lord Most High *(El 'Elyon)*.
>
> *Psalm 7:17, KJV*

See also: **El**.

Eloha (He) God; singular form of *Elohim*. See **Elohim**.

Elohim (He) God; plural form of *El* and *Eloha;* the commonest name for God in the Bible, sometimes appearing as *Elohim Ẓeva'ot* (the Lord of Hosts), referring to the angelic 'hosts' in the hierarchy of creation.

Some scholars think that the biblical use of the plural name *Elohim* points to the term's Canaanite origin, and is a reference to the numerous gods constituting the Canaanite pantheon, from which the Hebrew names for God originated. Others suggest that it refers to a 'demiurge', a 'right hand' of God or a lower creator-god through whom the creation came into being. Post-biblical Jewish mystics sometimes called this power *Metatron,* visualizing him sitting at the 'right hand' of God in the higher realms.

Understood mystically, the pantheon of gods espoused by some religions represents the various powers in the hierarchy of creation. The plural term, *Elohim,* could thus be a reference to the powers or emanations of the Supreme Being through whose action the creation came into existence. According to the Kabbalists, the Godhead itself did not create the creation directly. It was created through the activity of the ten emanations *(sefirot)* or qualities of the divine Source, as aspects of the divine Unity, split into 'rays' or emanations, as light by a prism.

In the Kabbalist spiritual practice known as *hazkarat shemot* (the remembrance of names), *Elohim* was understood to correspond to the *sefirah* or aspect of the Godhead called *Gevurah* (Might) or *Din* (Judgment), which signifies that He alone is God, the Supreme Being. It is the aspect that channels the quality of *Ḥesed* (divine love) into the creation. The *Zohar* says:

> *Elohim* testifies to His Godhead, that He is God, and God of gods, and that He is God above all, and that there is no god above Him.
>
> *Zohar 3:275b–285a, Ra'aya Meheimna, WZ1 p.264*

See also: **Adonai**, **Yahweh**.

Elohim Ẓeva'ot (He) See **Yahweh Ẓeva'ot**.

Enki (Su) The god of wisdom in ancient Sumerian and later Mesopotamian cultures, dating back to the third and fourth millennia BCE. *Enki* was he whose "particular element was the sweet waters bringing life to the land".[1] He was a benign being and a peacemaker, "lord of wisdom who lives in the deep … sometimes called the son of *Anu,* father of the gods, 'Begotten in his own image, … of broad understanding and mighty strength.' He was also in a particular degree the creator and benefactor of mankind."[2]

In Sumerian mythology, *Enki* is the dispenser of the Water of Life or the Plant or Bread of Life, provided by *Anu,* which brings the dead to life, bestowing immortality. It is probably *Enki* who is depicted on Sumerian pottery, carrying an overflowing vase of the Water of Life. Some legends are clearly precursors to biblical stories, especially those of *Genesis*. In the story of the goddess Inanna's descent to the underworld, Inanna, foretelling her own death, instructs her faithful messenger, Ninshubur, to seek help from *Enki,* god of wisdom, in order that she may be resurrected from death:

Father *Enki,* the lord of wisdom
who knows the Plant of Life,
who knows the Water of Life –
He will surely bring me back to life.
Inanna's Descent II:65–67, SLW pp.297, 307; cf. KTL p.33, SMS p.90

Inanna does indeed lose her life when the "seven judges", the *Anunnaki,* gaze at her with the "eyes of death", her corpse being subsequently impaled upon a stake. But *Enki* lives up to the faith Inanna had placed in him, sending to the rescue two creatures of his own fashioning with instructions on how to revive her corpse:

Sixty times the Plant of Life
and sixty times the Water of Life sprinkle upon it:
Verily, *Inanna* will arise.
Inanna's Descent II:244–45, SLW pp.301, 310; cf. KTL p.33, SMS p.94

This they do, and Inanna is resurrected, and ascends from the nether world.

The images and the myths of Sumerian and later Middle Eastern cultures survived and evolved. Thus, the Plant or Tree of Life later makes its first biblical appearance in the *Genesis* story of Adam and Eve. Likewise, also, the Water of Life or Living Water runs from the foot of the Tree of Life that grows in the garden planted eastward in Eden.[3]

The characteristics of *Enki* provide parallels to later mystical expression, not only to *Genesis.* Metaphors such as Father, Wisdom, son, dispenser of the Plant of Life and the Water of Life, begotten in the image of God, the creator and benefactor of mankind are familiar mystical themes. Mystics draw their inspiration and knowledge direct from God within themselves, but they speak in the language and idiom of the times, explaining the real meaning hidden within contemporary religious beliefs and sacred writings. Thus, *Enki* was perhaps a precursor to the later *Mazdā,* a term used by Zarathushtra for God as the Lord of wisdom. Later still, the Greek and Semitic peoples spoke of the Plant of Life, the Water of Life and Wisdom as the creative Power or Word.

See also: **Anu**, **Tree of Life** (3.1), **Water of Life** (3.1).

1. N.K. Sandars, *Epic of Gilgamesh, EG* p.26.
2. N.K. Sandars, quoting various Sumerian sources, *EG* p.26.
3. *Genesis* 2:8.

erekh apayim (He), **Arikh Anpin** (Am) *Lit.* long *(erekh, arikh)* face *(apayim, anpin);* long faced; an idiom meaning patient, slow to anger, long-suffering; descriptive of the Supreme Being, referring to His qualities of grace and love, and thus infinite patience. The term appears in biblical passages:

> The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion,
> slow to anger *(erekh apayim)*, and of abundant love.
>
> *Psalm 145:8, KB*

And:

> But thou O Lord, art a God full of compassion,
> and gracious, long-suffering *(erekh apayim)*,
> and bountiful in love and truth.
>
> *Psalm 86:15, KB*

In the Kabbalah, the Aramaic *Arikh Anpin* is used as a name for God: the Long-faced One, the Long-suffering One, the Patient One. More specifically, *Arikh Anpin* refers to the spiritual essence, presence or realm which has no beginning and is not subject to change. It is the level of divine mercy and forgiveness that transcends time. It is thus the level of the Godhead, and specifically signifies the transcendence and aloofness of the *Ayn-Sof*, the divine Source of all.

Arikh Anpin is also called *'Atika Kadisha* (the Ancient Holy One), since it represents the highest spiritual level or realm that pre-exists time itself.

See also: **'Atika Kadisha**.

ereẓ (He) *Lit.* land. See **promised land**.

esh (He) *Lit.* fire; in the Bible, the light of God's presence. According to the biblical story, God guides the Israelites by night, in a pillar of fire to provide light on their journey through the desert after their escape from Egypt. The story is retold by Nehemiah:

And you did lead them
with a pillar of cloud by day,
and with a pillar of fire *(esh)* by night;
To light for them the way
on which they should walk.

Nehemiah 9:12, JCL

Later, on his first encounter with God, Moses experiences the awesome divine presence in a blazing bush that is not consumed by the fire. Then, when he receives the revelation of God on Mount Sinai, God again appears as fire. The fire is described in the Bible as an aspect of God's glory *(kavod)* – His immanent divine presence:

> And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory *(kavod)* of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and the seventh day, He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory *(kavod)* of the Lord was like devouring fire *(esh)* on the top of the mount in the eyes of the people of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount; and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

Exodus 24:15–18, JCL

Mystically, these biblical stories are to be understood allegorically, the references being to the spiritual light of God whose intensity is so great that it is described as fire.

See also: **kavod**.

eternal realm, eternal region Eternity; the realm or region – if such it can be called – of God; the realm where there is no possibility of dissolution or change; the place where the soul achieves complete salvation and realizes eternal life; an expression used in religious and sacred literature from many lands and cultures, as in the gnostic text:

The eternal realm *(aeon)* of Truth has no shadow outside it,
for the limitless Light is everywhere within it.

On the Origin of the World 98:5, NHS21 pp.30–31

The gnostic *Gospel of Philip* also points out that to reap the spiritual reward of the eternal region it is necessary to sow the crop in "winter" – this world – meaning that the spiritual journey must be begun in human life:

Those who sow in winter reap in summer.
The winter is the world,
the summer the other eternal realm *(aeon)*.
Let us sow in the world that we may reap in the summer.
Gospel of Philip 52, NHS20 pp.144–45

See also: **anādi**, **eternity**, **al-Ṣamad**.

eternity, eternal One, eternal Existent The divine Reality beyond space, time and all realms of the creation; the condition of timeless existence; the eternal region; the state of God, where all is a sublime oneness of spiritual, timeless being.

Time is a measure of change, which implies differentiation between one thing and another; for without differentiation there can be no change and no time. It also implies a differentiation into observer and observed. The first manifestation of time, in essence or seed form, where time is so subtle that it mimics eternity, is in the highest reaches of the universal mind where the first hints of form and diversity originate.

The eternity of God lies beyond all such differentiation. He is commonly described as eternity, the eternal One and so on, as in the gnostic texts:

When you see the eternal Existent:
that is the great vision.
Dialogue of the Saviour 137:42, NHS26 p.75

And:

We have seen the really pre-existent One,
He that really exists,
He that is the first eternal One.
Three Steles of Seth 124, NHS30 pp.408–9

And more extensively:

He is immortal and eternal, having no birth:
for everyone who has birth will perish.
He is unbegotten, having no beginning:
for everyone who has a beginning has an end.
No one rules over Him.
He has no name:
for whoever has a name is the creation of another.
He is unnameable....

He is infinite; He is incomprehensible.
He is ever imperishable
 and has no likeness to anything.
He is unchanging good; He is faultless.
He is everlasting; He is blessed.
He is unknowable, while He (nonetheless) knows Himself.
He is immeasurable; He is untraceable.
He is perfect, having no defect.
He is imperishably blessed.
He is called 'Father of the universe'.

Eugnostos the Blessed 71–73, NHS27 pp.52, 54, 56

Several Hebrew terms are used in the Bible to convey the meaning of eternity: *'olam* or *le'olam* (realm, forever, eternally), *'ad* or *le'ad* (eternal, eternally) and *neẓaḥ* (eternity, victory). The Kabbalists used the term *Ayn-Sof* (endless, infinite) for the same Reality.

See also: **'olam**.

Father A male parent, the founder of a line or dynasty, an elderly or respected person; mystically, the Supreme Being, God; an epithet conveying His quality as creator, source, provider and protector of the soul. The term 'Father' was used extensively by Jesus and other Judaic, Greek and Middle Eastern writers.

The origin of the term may be sought in the mystics' use of human relationships to describe the spiritual reality. Just as human children require a human father in order to come into physical existence, so too do souls come into being as the spiritual children of God the Father, the eternal, self-existent, Supreme Being.

The Hebrew Bible contains many references to the relationship of God with his errant children, the children of Israel. Understood symbolically, this refers to the relationship of God to the soul. Human beings constantly err or sin, but the Father loves them dearly because He is their Father, and promises to take them back to His bosom, to bring them back to Himself. Isaiah says:

You are our Father,
 though Abraham is ignorant of us,
 and Israel does not acknowledge us;
You, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer;
From everlasting is Your name.

Isaiah 63:16, JCL

And Malachi:

> Have we not all one Father?
> Has not one God created us?
> Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother,
> by profaning the covenant of our fathers?
>
> *Malachi 2:10, JCL*

In Jewish prayers, God is referred to as *Av ha-raḥamim* (merciful Father), and the metaphor of father is often linked with that of the king, as in the expression *Avinu Malkenu* (*lit.* our Father, our King).

The relationship of a child to a father is one of love and complete reliance. The father gives security to the child. Hence, in the Christian gospels, Jesus concludes a short discourse, where he is speaking of the soul's reliance on God, with the advice to rely on Him in all matters:

> For your Father knoweth what things ye have need of,
> before ye ask Him.
>
> *Matthew 6:8, KJV*

Elsewhere, he observes that the Father is omniscient and involved in even the most seemingly insignificant aspects of His creation:

> Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?
> And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.
> But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.
>
> *Matthew 10:29–30, KJV*

Thus, Paul writes that He is the

> one God and Father of all, who is above all,
> and through all, and in you all.
>
> *Ephesians 4:6, KJV*

The term was commonly used by the early gnostic stream of Christianity, where the Father is the eternal, changeless Source of all. As one of these unknown writers puts it:

> Before anything came into being, it was the Father alone who existed, before the worlds that are in the heavens appeared, or the world that is on the earth, or (any) principality, or authority, or the powers.... Nothing came into being without His wish.
>
> *Authoritative Teaching 25–26, NHS11 pp.268–69*

Or as another writes:

You alone are the unchanging One,
  and You alone are the infinite One,
  and You alone are the incomprehensible One,
  and You alone are the unbegotten One,
  and the self-begotten One and the Self-Father....

Now hear me, O imperishable Father and immortal Father,
  God of things that are hidden,
  of only light and life,
  alone invisible and alone unutterable,
  and alone undefiled, and alone invincible,
  and alone the First-existent –
The One before whom there is no other.

Untitled Text 262:20; cf. BC pp.286–89

In the same text, the writer goes on to say that the Father is the "First Source" of everything, having created all things by means of His "Voice" or "First Sound":

This is the First Father of the All (the creation);
This is the First Eternity;
This is the King of the unassailables;
This is He in whom the All is unconscious;
This is He who gave form to it within Himself;
This is the self-originated and self-begotten place....

There was silence concerning Him;
He was not spoken of, for He is an ineffable One:
  He cannot be understood;
This is the First Source.

This is He whose Voice has penetrated everywhere;
This is the First Sound,
  until the All perceived and understood;
This is He whose members make a myriad myriad powers
  to each one of them.

Untitled Text 226:1, BC pp.214–15

Consequently, as the gnostic *Gospel of Truth* has it, He is

the incomprehensible, inconceivable One,
the Father, the perfect One,
the One who made the Totality (the creation).

> Within Him is the Totality,
> and of Him the Totality has need.
> *Gospel of Truth 18, NHS22 pp.84–85*

Or as another writer says:

> My Father: I call upon You,
> who rules over the kingdom of power,
> whose Word *(Logos)* comes as a birth of light....
>
> He is the One whose will begets life
> for the forms in every place.
> His nature gives form to substance....
> His providence extends to everyone....
> He created everything.
> He who is self-contained cares for everything.
> He is perfect, the invisible God
> to whom one speaks in silence.
> *Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth 55–56, NHS11 pp.354–55*

See also: **Only-begotten Son** (3.1), **son of God** (5.1), **Son of God** (3.1, ▸2).

Fattāḥ, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Opener, the Enlightener; the Discloser of ways and means; He who grants victory; He who decides; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh*. *Al-Fattāḥ* implies that *Allāh* is the Opener of that which is locked, and the Solver of that which is tangled and insoluble, both outwardly and in the hearts of men:

> Say: "Our Lord will gather us together
> and will in the end decide the matter
> between us (and you) in truth and justice.
> And He is the One to decide *(al-Fattāḥ)*,
> the One who knows all."
> *Qur'ān 34:26, AYA*

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

Fayḍ al-Aqdas, al- (A), **Fayż-i Aqdas** (P) *Lit.* the Most Holy *(Aqdas)* Effusion *(Fayḍ)*; Most Sacred or Most Pure Projection, the Holiest Emanation, Blessing or Grace. *Fayḍ* connotes an emanation or effusion, as well as a blessing or grace. In describing the process by which God creates the creation, Sufis speak in terms of emanation *(fayḍ)* or manifestation *(tajalliyāt)*. *Fayḍ* denotes

the overflowing, the raying out of the Absolute; it implies an overflowing beneficence.

Two levels of emanation or effusion are distinguished: *al-Fayḍ al-Aqdas* (Most Holy Emanation) and *al-Fayḍ al-Muqaddas* (Holy Effusion). *Al-Fayḍ al-Aqdas* refers to the First Entification *(Taʿayyun),* that plane of consciousness at which, in Qūnawī's terminology, "He manifested Himself to Himself in theophany *(tajalla bi-dhātihi li-dhātihi)*" before the creation entered into outward existence. This First Entification is sometimes delineated into three levels named *aḥadīyah, waḥdah,* and *waḥdānīyah* or *wāḥidīyah,* all these terms meaning 'oneness'. This First Entification, or the three planes of oneness, make up the *tanzīh* – the imperceptible, indescribable, incomparable level of the creation, the plane of consciousness above the origin of the *Logos* or divine Creative Word that brings the creation into being.

Al-Fayḍ al-Muqaddas or Holy Effusion refers to the Second Entification, the Effusion of His manifestation through which all the worlds are created:[1]

> Sufis say that *Ḥaqq* (Truth) is an absolute Being, meaning a Being independent of everything else. They say *Ḥaqq* has projected Himself in the creation in two ways: one is called the Holiest Projection or Holiest Blessing *(Fayż-i Aqdas)* and is the first rank amongst His manifestations. Here, *Ḥaqq* manifested the basic essence of His knowledge to create. Second is the Holy Projection or Holy Blessing *(Fayż-i Muqaddas),* in which all things from the state of inner potential and power came into the state of actuality.
>
> *Ṣamad Muwaḥḥid, Introduction to Gulshan-i Rāz, GR pp.36–37*

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī says the same:

> *Ḥaqq,* the majesty, has two projections: the first is the projection of the essence of knowledge, called by *Ṣūfīs* the Holiest Projection *(Fayż-i Aqdas).* This is the manifestation of *Ḥaqq* – Glory unto Him for eternity and infinity! – as His own knowledge of Himself in the form of essences, and their abilities and capabilities.
>
> The second is the projection of visible existence, called by *Ṣūfīs* the Holy Projection *(Fayż-i Muqaddas).* This is the appearance of *Ḥaqq,* the almighty and praiseworthy, as the creator of the form of laws and signs of the essences. This second projection is the result of and subsequent to the first one.
>
> *Jāmī, Lavā'iḥ, in GR p.37*

1. W.C. Chittick and P.L. Wilson, *Divine Flashes, DF* p.11.

Fayḍ al-Muqaddas, al- (A), **Fayż-i Muqaddas** (P) *Lit.* the Holy *(Muqaddas)* Effusion *(Fayḍ);* Holy Emanation, Holy Blessing, Holy Grace.

See **al-Fayḍ al-Aqdas**.

first homeland One of the many Mandaean terms for the eternal realm:

> Rise up, rise up, soul,
> ascend to your first homeland!
> Rise, rise to your first homeland,
> the place from which you were transplanted,
> to the place from which you were transplanted,
> to your good dwelling, the dwelling of *'uthras* (pure souls).
>
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 94; cf. CPM p.97*

See also: **abode**.

First Life A Mandaean term for God.

See **Life**.

garō demāna (Av), **garotman** (Pv) *Lit.* house *(demāna)* of heavenly song *(garō);* the source of the divine Music; the abode of *Ahurā;* the name of the true eternal home to which the disciples of Zarathushtra aspired. Zarathushtra writes:

> O *Mazdā Ahurā,* thus in praises would I worship Thee,
> through Truth *(Ashā)*
> and through Thy Supreme Mind *(Vahishta Manō),*
> and through Thy Might and Majesty *(Xshathrā)*
> by which the seeker after Thee
> is firmly set upon the path.
> Let me listen *(sraoshānāi)* clearly to Thy glories
> in the house of heavenly song *(garō demāna).*
>
> *Zarathushtra, Yasna 50:4; cf. DSZ p.743*

See also: **anaghra raochah** (Pv), **drujō demāna** (6.2), **Sraosha** (3.1).

Geush Tashā (Av) *Lit.* Creator *(Tashā)* of Life *(Geush);* God. In one of his *Gāthās,* Zarathushtra relates an allegory in which the various aspects of the supreme Lord confer with Him concerning the pleas for help that have risen

up from the living soul. The parable commences with the living soul (*geush urvā, lit.* soul of life) complaining to the Creator of Life *(Geush Tashā)* about her plight in this world, describing the suffering, ill will and general disarray by which she is surrounded, and asking why she has been created. She seeks His protection, and prays that an exit may be revealed to her through a Saviour. Zarathushtra is then appointed as the Saviour to relieve the suffering of the soul, and bring her back to God.[1]

See also: **geush urvā** (5.1).

1. Zarathushtra, *Yasna* 29:1–11.

gharīb-navāz (U/H), **gharīb-nivāz** (Pu), **gharīb-parwar** (U/Pu) *Lit.* merciful *(navāz)* to the poor *(gharīb);* merciful to the spiritually bereft, kind to the poor; sustainer *(parwar)* of the poor *(gharīb);* nourisher of the meek and humble, benefactor of the weak and helpless, supporter and protector of the spiritually destitute; terms prevalent in Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi, *parwar* and *navāz* being Persian, the Arabic *gharīb* also meaning 'stranger'; used in courtly language, the two terms having substantially the same meaning, *gharīb-navāz* being a little stronger than *gharīb-parwar;* used both descriptively and as epithets of God:

> I am a poor man
> and You are merciful to the poor *(gharīb-navāz).*
> Catch hold of my hand and take me with You.
> *Dariyā Sāhib, Chune hue Shabd 10:6, DSC p.39*

> O Merciful to the Poor *(Gharīb-Navāz),*
> protect my honour.
> Everything in my life goes awry:
> who will set things right but You?
> *Charaṇdās, Bānī 1, Binti aur Prārthanā 10:1, CDB1 p.45*

See also: **dīn dayāl**.

glory See **hod, kavod**.

God The power or Being considered to be and worshipped as the supreme Spirit that transcends all, creates all and controls all; the Creator and ruler of everything; the Supreme Being; the Source of all that exists; the Ocean of love,

consciousness and intelligence at the heart of everything. Many names have been given to this nameless power by human beings. Mystics have taught that there is only one supreme power in creation, and that everything is constantly maintained and sustained by it.

See also: **Adonai**, **Allāh**, **God (among the early Greeks)**, **God (in early Christianity)**, **God (in Indian thought)**, **God (in Judaism)**, **Yahweh**.

God (among the early Greeks) Despite a popular belief in the many gods of their mythology, the Greek mystics and philosophers commonly spoke of one transcendent God as the supreme Cause and Author of all things. The early Christian father, Clement of Alexandria quotes an Orphic text on the oneness, self-existence and omniscience of the Divine:

> He is One, self-proceeding,
> and from Him alone all things proceed,
> and in them, He Himself exerts His activity:
> No mortal beholds Him, but He beholds all.
>
> *Orphic Text, in Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Heathen VII, WCA1 p.74*

He also cites the early Greek dramatist, Sophoclēs (*c*.496–406 BCE), who speaks of God as the sole creator of the cosmos, and the futility of sacrifices to and idol worship of man-made deities:

> One, in truth, one is God, who made both heaven and the far-stretching earth, and the ocean's blue wave, and the mighty winds. But many of us mortals, deceived in heart, have set up for ourselves, as a consolation in our sufferings, images of the gods of stone, or wood, or brass, or gold, or ivory. And, appointing to them sacrifices and fruitless festal assemblages, are accustomed thus to practise religion.
>
> *Sophoclēs, in Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Heathen II; cf. WCA1 p.73*

The unknown author of the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise, *On the Cosmos*, speaks both of God's transcendence and the order by which His presence is known in the universe. Here, the Greek *'kosmos'* means order, hence the English 'cosmos', the word also containing overtones of 'beauty', from which 'cosmetic' has its origin:

> It is the nature of the Divine to penetrate throughout everything....
>
> God, who is mightiest in power *(dynamis)*, outstanding in beauty, immortal in life, and supreme in excellence ... though He is invisible to every mortal thing, He is seen through His deeds. For it would

be true to say that all the phenomena of the air, the land and the water are the works of God who rules the cosmos; from whom, according to Empedoclēs, the natural philosopher:

> grows all that is and was and is yet to come,
> the trees and the whole race of men and women,
> beasts, birds, and water-nurtured fish....

This is the position held in the cosmos by God, who maintains the orderliness and preservation of the whole....

In a word, then, as the helmsman in his ship, as the charioteer in his chariot, as the leader in a chorus, as the lawgiver in a city, as the commander in a military camp, so is God in the cosmos.... He is established in the immovable, and moves and directs all things as and where He wishes among the varieties of form and nature.

Pseudo-Aristotle, On the Cosmos 6:397b, 399b–400b.
SCC pp.386–87, 396–99, 402–3

Plutarch speaks of God as the absolute Reality who exists beyond time:

> And what, then, is that which really exists?
> It is the Eternal, the Uncreated, the Undying,
> to whom time brings no change.
>
> For time is always flowing and never stays;
> It is a vessel charged with birth and decay:
> it has a before and an after,
> a 'will be' and a 'has been':
> It belongs to the 'is not' rather than to the 'is'.
>
> But God is: and that not in time, but in eternity,
> that has no before or after....
> And being One, He fills eternity with one Now,
> and so really 'is', not 'has been' or 'will be',
> Without beginning and without ceasing.

Plutarch, The Ei at Delphi 19–20:392–93, PMB5 pp.242, 244, in IGI p.242

Following a similar line of thought, Heraclitus, writing in the fifth century BCE, observes:

> From out of all the many particulars comes oneness,
> and out of oneness come all the many particulars.

Heraclitus, Fragment 112, HPW p.90

Even so, says the third-century (CE) Plotinus, the One is beyond all created things:

> (The One) is in reality ineffable. For of whatever you speak, you speak of a certain thing. But of that which is beyond all things, and which is beyond even the most venerable intellect, it is alone true to assert that It has not any other name (than the Ineffable), and that It is not some one of all things. Properly speaking, however, there is no name of It, because nothing can be asserted of It.
>
> *Plotinus, Enneads 5:3.13, SWP p.280*

Similarly, the unknown writer of the *Corpus Hermeticum,* originating in the first two or three centuries of the Christian era, comments:

> Wherefore, O Hermēs, never think that anything of things above or things below is like to God, for you will fall from truth. For nothing can be compared to That which has no likeness, and is Alone and One.
>
> *Corpus Hermeticum XI:5; cf. TGH2 p.178*

And speaking with evident spiritual fervour:

> How, further, shall I hymn Thee?
> As being of myself?
> As having something of mine own?
> As being other?
>
> For Thou art whatever I may be;
> Thou art whatever I may do;
> Thou art whatever I may speak.
>
> For Thou art all,
>   and there is nothing else which Thou art not.
> Thou art all that which doth exist,
>   and Thou art what doth not exist –
> Mind when Thou thinkest,
>   and Father when Thou makest,
>   and God when Thou dost energize,
>   and Good and Maker of all things.
>
> *Corpus Hermeticum V:11; cf. TGH2 pp.105–6*

Thus, Plotinus can summarize:

> We maintain, and it is evident truth, that the One is everywhere and yet nowhere.
>
> *Plotinus, Enneads 6:8.16; cf. PEC p.351*

Or, explaining it more fully, though enigmatically:

> How, then, does Unity give rise to multiplicity?
>
> By Its omnipresence: there is nowhere where It is not. It occupies, therefore, all that is. At once, It is manifold – or, rather, It is all things.
>
> If It were simply and solely everywhere, all would be this one Thing alone: but It is, also, in no place. Thus, ... while all exists by means of It – by virtue of Its omnipresence – all is distinct from It by virtue of Its being nowhere.
>
> But why is It not merely present everywhere, but in addition nowhere present?
>
> Because, universality demands a previous unity. It must, therefore, pervade all things and make all, but not be the universe which It makes.
>
> *Plotinus, Enneads 3:9.3a; cf. PEC p.137*

But this God, taught the Greek Stoic philosopher, Epictetus (*c*.50–120 CE), who also believed in universal brotherhood and the renunciation of self, is within:

> You are a fragment of God Himself; you contain a part of Him in yourself. Why, then, are you so ignorant of your noble birth? ... You carry God about with you, poor wretch, and know it not. Do you suppose I mean some external god made of gold or silver? No, it is within yourself that you carry Him about, unaware that you are profaning Him by impure thoughts and unclean deeds. When in the presence even of an idol of a god, you do not dare to act as you do at other times. But when God Himself is within you, hearing and seeing all, are you not ashamed to think and act thus, you who are ignorant of your own nature?
>
> *Epictetus, Discourses 2:8.11–14; cf. DE p.91, PBC p.213*

See also: **Allāh**, **God**, **God (in early Christianity)**, **God (in Indian thought)**, **God (in Judaism)**, **Zeus**.

God (in early Christianity) Although Christianity has always espoused a belief in one God, the characteristics attributed to the Divine vary to some extent, depending upon who is speaking. To Jesus and the writers of the New Testament documents, there was one eternal God, whose overriding charac-

teristic was that of love. Hence, when asked for the most important "commandment" or aspect of Jewish belief, Jesus quotes *Deuteronomy:*

> The first of all the commandments is:
> "Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord."
> *Mark 12:29, Deuteronomy 6:4, KJV*

And he follows it with another saying from the same source:

> Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,
> and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.
> *Matthew 22:37; cf. Deuteronomy 6:5, KJV*

And he links it to a saying from *Leviticus:*

> Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
> *Matthew 19:19, 22:29; Leviticus 19:18, KJV*

Similarly, Paul writes that there is

> one God and Father of all, who is above all,
> and through all, and in you all.
> *Ephesians 4:6, KJV*

And elsewhere, he writes of "God's great love and peace",[1] "God, who is rich in mercy", and "His great love",[2] while his also letters contain frequent pleas that all his followers should love one other.

John, too, reiterates the theme of love. "God is love," he says, and the relationship of the individual to God is also that of love:

> Ye are of God, little children....
> We are of God....
> Beloved, let us love one another:
> for love is of God;
> And every one that loveth is born of God,
> and knoweth God.
> He that loveth not knoweth not God,
> for God is love....
>
> Beloved, if God so loved us,
> we ought also to love one another....
> If we love one another, God dwelleth in us,
> and His love is perfected in us....

God is love,
and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God,
and God in him....

We love Him, because He first loved us.
If a man say, "I love God," and hateth his brother,
he is a liar:
For he that loveth not his brother
whom he hath seen,
how can he love God whom he hath not seen?
And this commandment have we from Him,
that he who loveth God, love his brother also.

1 John 4:4, 6–8, 11–12, 16, 19–21, KJV

Jesus also pointed out that this God could be seen or experienced by those who had become totally pure:

Blessed are the pure in heart:
for they shall see God.

Matthew 5:8, KJV

Other writers in early Christian times, especially those of a gnostic disposition, expanded upon this basic theme. The author of the *Odes of Solomon* says that the Lord is like a living "crown" – or garland – "of Truth" upon his head, whose flowers and branches have budded within him. And this budding of life has brought perfection and salvation:

The Lord is upon my head like a crown of flowers,
and I shall never be without Him.
A crown of Truth has been plaited for me,
and it has caused Thy shoots to grow within me.
For it is not like a withered crown which blossoms not:
but Thou art alive upon my head,
and Thou hast blossomed upon me.
Thy fruits are full and perfect:
they are full of Thy salvation.

Odes of Solomon 1:1–5

The author of the *Teachings of Silvanus* says that He is everywhere and within everything. Yet although He is within all, He is also aloof from everything. This is one of the paradoxes of mysticism that can only be understood through mystic experience:

> Consider these things about God: He is in every place; on the other hand, He is in no place. With respect to His Power, to be sure, He is in every place; but with respect to His divinity, He is in no place. So, then, it is possible to know God a little. With respect to His Power, He fills every place; but in the exaltation of His divinity nothing contains Him. Everything is in God, but God is not in anything.
>
> *Teachings of Silvanus 100–1; cf. NHS30 pp.320–23*

More simply, a Manichaean psalmist writes that God is everywhere and in all things:

> My God, You are a marvel to tell.
> You are within, You are without.
> You are above, You are below,
> You are near and far,
> You are hidden and revealed,
> You are silent and speak, too;
> Yours is all the glory.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.155*

Mystics have repeated that God is without form and character. Hence, whatever may be said about Him, is not Him. This is what is meant in the *Teachings of Silvanus* when the writer says:

> My son, do not dare to say a word about this One,
> and do not confine the God of all to mental images.
>
> *Teachings of Silvanus 102, NHS30 pp.324–25*

This, however, does not prevent the devotees from attempting to describe Him, as in the Judaeo-Christian *Clementine Homilies:*

> Wherefore, Clement, my son, beware of thinking otherwise of God, than that He is the only God, and Lord, and Father, good and righteous, the Creator, long-suffering, merciful, the sustainer, the benefactor, ordaining love of men, counselling purity, immortal and making immortal, incomparable, dwelling in the souls of the good, that cannot be contained and yet is contained, who has fixed the great world as a centre in space, who has spread out the heavens and solidified the earth, who has stored up the water, who has disposed the stars in the sky, who has made the fountains flow in the earth, has produced fruits, has raised up mountains, has set bounds to the sea, has ordered winds and blasts, who by the spirit of counsel has kept safely the body comprehended in a boundless sea.
>
> *Clementine Homilies II:45; cf. CH pp.53–54*

God Himself is described in many religions and by many mystics as unbegotten and immortal or eternal, meaning that He is what He is in Himself. He has always existed, beyond all time, and was never created by any other power. Thus, the *Acts of Philip* speaks of

> the unbegotten nature of the immortal God.
>
> *History of Philip, AAA p.69*

Similarly, the writer of the *Acts of John* describes him as

> the Root of immortality,
> and the Fountain of incorruption,
> and the Foundation of all the worlds.
>
> *Decease of St John; cf. AAA p.64*

Expressing the same idea, but more expansively, the writer of the *Acts of Thomas* has Judas Thomas praise God by reference to His many attributes, as perceived by human beings:

> To You be glory,
> Lord of all, self-existent, unutterable,
> hidden in the brightness of Your glory
> from all the (created) worlds....
> To You be glory, Father serene....
> To You be glory, feeder of all,
> present in all worlds, on high and in the deep,
> there being no place that is void of You....
> To You be glory, good Father, dwelling in pure hearts,
> in the minds of Your devotees....
> To You be glory, Father omnipotent....
> To You be glory, Father giving life to all.
>
> *Acts of Thomas VIII; cf. AAA pp.245–49*

Likewise, the writer of *1 Timothy* describes Him as:

> The King eternal, immortal, invisible,
> the only wise God.
>
> *1 Timothy 1:17, KJV*

And in the *Book of Revelation,* He is also described as the ruler, the one who reigns over creation:

> For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.
>
> *Book of Revelation 19:6, KJV*

The writer of the *Gospel of Truth* says that He is the creator of the Totality (the creation):

> As for the incomprehensible, inconceivable One,
> the Father, the perfect One,
> the One who made the Totality,
> within Him is the Totality,
> and of Him the Totality has need.
>
> *Gospel of Truth 18, NHS22 pp.84–85*

The author of the *Tripartite Tractate* also endeavours to convey an understanding of His nature:

> He is without beginning and without end. Not only is He without end – He is immortal for this reason, that He is unbegotten – but He is also invariable in His eternal existence.... He has not had anyone who initiated His own existence. Thus, He is Himself unchanged and no one else can remove Him from His existence ... and his greatness.... Nor is it possible for anyone else to change Him into a different form or to reduce Him, or alter Him or diminish Him ... who is the unalterable, immutable One, with immutability clothing Him.
>
> Not only is He the one called 'without a beginning' and 'without an end', because He is unbegotten and immortal; but just as He has no beginning and no end as He is, He is unattainable in His greatness, inscrutable in His wisdom, incomprehensible in His power, and unfathomable in His sweetness.
>
> *Tripartite Tractate 52–53, NHS22 pp.192–95*

The same writer also points out that man has invented many names for God, but God is not contained in any of these names:

> Not one of the names which are conceived, or spoken, seen or grasped, not one of them applies to Him, even though they are exceedingly glorious, magnifying and honoured. However, it is possible to utter these names for His glory and honour, in accordance with the capacity of each of those who give Him glory. Yet as for Him, in His own existence, being and form, it is impossible for mind to conceive Him, nor can any speech convey Him, nor can any eye see Him, nor can any body grasp Him, because of his inscrutable greatness and His incomprehensible depth, and His immeasurable height, and His illimitable will.
>
> This is the nature of the unbegotten One, which does not touch anything else; nor is it joined (to anything) in the manner of something

> which is limited. Rather, He possesses this constitution, without having a face or a form, things which are understood through perception, whence also comes (the epithet) 'the incomprehensible'.
>
> If He is incomprehensible, then it follows that He is unknowable, that He is the one who is inconceivable by any thought, invisible by anything, ineffable by any word, untouchable by any hand. He alone is the one who knows Himself as He is, along with His form and His greatness and His magnitude. And since He has the ability to conceive of Himself, to see Himself, to name Himself, to comprehend Himself, He alone is the one who is His own mind, His own eye, His own mouth, His own form. And He is what He thinks, what He sees, what He speaks, what He grasps, Himself, the one who is inconceivable, ineffable, incomprehensible, immutable, while sustaining, joyous, true, delightful, and restful is that which He conceives, that which He sees, that about which He speaks, that which He has as thought.
>
> He transcends all wisdom, and is above all intellect, and is above all glory, and is above all beauty, and all sweetness, and all greatness, and any depth and any height.
>
> *Tripartite Tractate 54–55, NHS22 pp.196–99*

God is unknowable, says the writer – yet he adds immediately that if He wishes to make Himself known He can do so through His "Power", His "Will" – terms synonymous with the Creative Word:

> If this One, who is unknowable in His nature, to whom pertain all the greatnesses which I already mentioned, if, out of the abundance of His sweetness, He wishes to grant knowledge so that He might be known, He has the ability to do so. He has His Power, which is His Will.
>
> Now, however, in silence He Himself holds back – He who is the Great One, who is the cause of bringing the Totalities (realms of creation) into … being.
>
> *Tripartite Tractate 55, NHS22 pp.198–99*

These descriptions are all representative of God's nature, apart from man, so to speak. However, as they all agree, God is within man and is the bestower of love, light, wisdom, enlightenment and understanding at the human level. Speaking of this aspect, the writer of *2 Timothy* says:

> The Lord give thee understanding in all things.
>
> *2 Timothy 2:7, KJV*

By the same token, God is not only the true source of understanding, but He also understands all human hearts. Therefore, the early-second-century Christian father, Ignatius, writes:

> Nothing is hidden from the Lord, but even our secret things are near to Him. Let us therefore do everything knowing that He dwells in us, that we may be His temples, and that He may be in us as God. Indeed, this is so, and will be revealed to us by the love we rightly have for Him.
>
> *Ignatius, To the Ephesians 15:3, AF1 p.188*

In fact, God is said to know everything, throughout His creation. Hence, in the *Teachings of Silvanus,* the author says that God knows all things before they happen, and He also knows the content of every heart:

> God does not need to put any man to the test. He knows all things before they happen, and He knows the hidden things of the heart. They are all revealed and found wanting in His presence. Let no one ever say that God is ignorant. For it is not right to place the Creator of every creature in ignorance. For even things which are in darkness, before Him are as if in the light.
>
> *Teachings of Silvanus 115–16; cf. NHS30 pp.362–63*

See also: **Allāh, God, God (among the early Greeks), God (in Indian thought), God (in Judaism)**.

1. *2 Corinthians* 13:11, *KJV.*
2. *Colossians* 2:4.

God (in Indian thought) From the era of the *Vedas* (*c.*1500 BCE), and gaining significant ground during and since the time of the *Upanishads* (*c.*900–600 BCE), Indian spiritual and religious thought has accepted the idea of one supreme Lord. Although commonly perceived as a religion of many gods, Indian polytheism is set firmly within a framework of monotheism. The one God is seen as the architect and ruler of all aspects of creation, including its many lesser deities, and is regarded as the absolute Reality, indescribable, transcendent and immanent.

In the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā,* this one, absolute and supreme Reality is known as *Brahman* and *Parameshvara.* In the *Bhagavad Gītā,* Arjuna says to Kṛishṇa, as the personification of *Brahman:*

O boundless in power and immeasurable in might,
I bow to You from in front,
from behind and from all sides.
O All in all, You permeate all,
and, therefore, You indeed are All.

Bhagavad Gītā 11:40

He is beyond all, penetrates all, yet He dwells within. Hence, Kṛishṇa replies:

Being without beginning,
and without attributes *(nirguṇa),*
the supreme Self *(Paramātmā),*
though dwelling in the body (as the soul),
remains actionless and untouched (by action).

Bhagavad Gītā 13:31

The *Upanishads* repeat the same philosophy:

Having obtained the inner eye of wisdom,
a person should become so absorbed
in gazing at the firelike, resplendent *Brahman*
that he attains the realization:
"I am the undivided, pure and peaceful *Brahman.*"

Brahma Bindu Upanishad 21, HTU p.128

This understanding has been echoed through the ages by a wealth of Indian yogis, *ṛishis, munis* and *swāmīs.* Thus, Gauḍapāda speaks of "the fearless *Brahman,* the light of whose consciousness is all-pervading".[1]

Later Indian mystics have likewise described the indescribable divine Being in many ways:

Unmovable, beyond reach and unfathomable:
no one can possibly describe His status.

Keshavdās, Amīghūnt, Rāg Mangal 1:1, KDA p.1

The ocean of existence continues unabated,
while He is inaccessible,
indescribable and far beyond.
(My) boat is storm damaged and is heavy laden,
I know not how to get across.

Tulsīdās, Bārahmāsī, Shrāvaṇ 1–2, TDB p.2

He, the God Lord *(Purakh),* is beyond reach:
tell me, how can one attain to Him?
He has neither form nor sign and is invisible:
tell me then, O Saints, how is He to be remembered?
He is the formless, mammon-free *(nirañjan)* and unapproachable Lord *(Hari):*
what excellences of His should one narrate and sing?
Whom the Lord Himself, of Himself, instructs,
he alone treads on God's *(Hari)* path.

Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 644, MMS

His living form is immortal and imperishable:
He is pure light, He is omniscient, He is formless.

Dariyā Sāhib, Chune hue Shabd, Bandanā 2:2–3, DSC p.1

O my soul (*man,* mind),
contemplate thou the fearfree Lord (*Nirbhau,* the Fearless)
who is true, true, ever true.
He is sans enmity, the Being beyond time *(Akāl),*
unborn and self-illumined.
O my mind, night and day, meditate thou on thy Formless *(Nirankār)* and self-sustained Lord.

Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 1201, MMS

Though He may be everywhere in His creation, mystics also say that He is to be found within:

Within the body abides the Lord Himself:
He is undiscernible *(alakh),* and can be discerned not.

Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 754, MMS

He who is called the Lord of universe *(Gusāīn)*
is above weal and woe, and He is ever detached.
He, the Lord, abides within thy inner self,
like the reflection in a mirror, O Nānak.

Guru Tegh Bahādur, Ādi Granth 632, MMS

All things lie within the orbit of God's will; He is the giver of all joys, worldly or spiritual. Hence, Guru Rāmdās, drawing on Indian mythology, says that even the *Kāmadhenu,* a mythical cow belonging to the deity *Indra* and able to fulfil all desires, is under the divine will. He therefore recommends meditation on God for the attainment of peace and complete satisfaction:

The Lord is the fulfiller of aspirations *(ichhā Pūrak),*
and the Giver of all the comforts;
In His power is the Elysian cow *(Kāmadhenu).*
So, O my soul, meditate, on such Lord:
then alone shalt thou obtain all the comforts, O my soul (*man,* mind).

Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 669, MMS

Full of love and praise for the Supreme, Indian mystics have described Him in many ways, but in the end they acknowledge that words fail to provide any adequate description of Him at all. As Guru Nānak wrote in the *Jap Jī:*

Innumerable are Thy Names and innumerable Thy abodes, O Lord!
Innumerable are Thy realms, inaccessible and inscrutable:
even to call them myriad amounts to carrying a load of sin on the head.

Through words, Thy Name is uttered,
and through words, Thou art praised.
Through words, the songs of Thy theology
and Thine attributes are hymned.
In letters, the uttered hymns are hymned.

With letters on mortal's brow, his destiny is described:
(but God) who scribed these destinies, His head bears it not.
As He ordains, so do men obtain.

As great is Thy creation, so great is Thy celebrity:
without Thy Name, there is no place.
What power have I to describe Thy doctrines?
I cannot even once be a sacrifice unto Thee.
Whatever pleases Thee, that is a good pursuit:
Thou art ever safe and sound, O formless One!

Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 4, MMS

Or as Nāmdev wrote:

Who can claim the Lord to have known?
Sister, beyond ties of family is He....
As the track of a bird is not perceived in the sky,
as the path of a fish cannot be seen in the water,
and as the vessel is not filled with the mirage water of the sky –
So is God, Nāma's Lord *(Bīṭhal),*
to whom these three illustrations befit.

Nāmdev, Ādi Granth 525, MMS

Everything is the Lord *(Gobind)*, everything is the Lord *(Gobind)*:
there is nothing but God *(Gobind)*, the world Sustainer.
As one thread holds hundreds and thousands of beads,
so is that Lord in warp and woof *(otpot)*.

Nāmdev, Ādi Granth 485, MMS

Most Hindu religious and philosophical systems presume the existence of a deity in some form or other. Buddhism is perhaps the most well known for its divergence in this respect, although its goal, *nirvāṇa*, is regarded as a supreme state of being which – metaphysical speculation aside – is essentially the same as the God-realization of other systems. Some other Hindu schools see God less as a 'personal' being and more in the nature of an absolute Reality, like the *Brahman* of the *Upanishads*. Later Indian mystics, however, rather than mystically minded philosophers, have generally avoided metaphysical speculation. They have pointed out that the only way to know the nature of Reality or God is to find a way of experiencing Him for oneself.

See also: **Allāh**, **God**, **God (among the early Greeks)**, **God (in early Christianity)**, **God (in Judaism)**.

1. Gauḍapāda, *Kārikā* 3:35 on *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad.*

God (in Judaism) (He. *Adonai, El, Elohim, 'Elyon, Yahweh*) The belief in one God – also expressed as God's unity – is the essence of Jewish belief in a supreme Deity. In academic or theological terms, this belief is called monotheism. Prior to the first beginnings of Judaism, however, the people worshipped many gods (polytheism), the transition from polytheism to monotheism being documented in *Genesis*, the first book of the Bible.

According to the legend, Abraham breaks his father's idols, after which God appears to him, telling him to leave the land of his fathers and travel to "a land I shall show you".[1] Later Jewish interpreters have understood the story symbolically as a divine command to Abraham to relinquish his old way of life, and put his complete faith in the one God, despite the fact that his destination remained unrevealed.

Later, after Abraham's descendants, the Israelites, had adopted the worship of one God, *Yahweh*, the Bible records their repeated tendency to revert to idol worship, fertility cults and so forth, with the Israelite prophets persistently and eloquently remonstrating with them to return to the worship of the one God. The total devotion and unwavering fidelity required for the worship of *Yahweh* is expressed eloquently in the first three of the Ten Commandments:

And God spoke all these words, saying:
"I am the Lord your God,
who have brought you out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of slavery.
You shall have no other gods before me.
You shall not make for you any engraved image,
or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above,
or that is in the earth beneath,
or that is in the water under the earth;
You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them."

Exodus 20:1–5, JCL

The unity of God and the need for one-pointed worship of Him is epitomized in *Deuteronomy,* in lines recited at least three times daily in Jewish prayers:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord *(Yahweh)* is our God,
the Lord is one;
And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul, and with all your might.

Deuteronomy 6:4–5; cf. JCL, KJV, JPS

God, being the one power that governs and permeates all, is all-knowing and omnipresent. He is close by, not distant. Speaking in God's name, the prophet Jeremiah says:

"Am I a God near at hand," says the Lord,
"and not a God far away?"
"Can any hide himself in secret places
that I shall not see him?" says the Lord.
"Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the Lord.

Jeremiah 23:23–24, JCL

In the *Psalms,* God is portrayed as the embodiment of love; the singular, all-pervasive, immanent divine Power that creates and sustains the creation:

I will sing of the constant love of the Lord for ever:
with my mouth I will make known Your faithfulness
to all generations.
For I have said, "The world is built by love;
Your faithfulness shall You establish in the very heavens." …
Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne:
love and truth shall go before You.

Psalm 89:2–3, 15, JCL

Another psalm says that those who come to know His love walk in His light, rejoice continually in His Holy Name, His creative Power, and "know the joyful Sound" – seemingly references to the blissful, divine Music within:

> Happy is the people who know the joyful Sound:
> they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance.
> In Your Name shall they rejoice all the day:
> and in Your righteousness shall they be exalted.
>
> *Psalm 89:16–17, JCL*

Biblical writers often described God and His motivations in human terms. He has arms, hands and eyes; He sits on a throne; He feels compassion, love, anger and jealousy. Such anthropomorphic descriptions are symbolic, in keeping with the symbolic use of language in those times to explain metaphysical concepts. However, His unity, His all-encompassing oneness and power was the underlying reality being described.

In later rabbinic and medieval times, with an increasing tendency to take biblical symbolism literally, these human descriptions of God were disturbing. If He is the all-pervasive Spirit and power, and thus incorporeal, having no form and not bound by time, how could He be described in human terms?

Moses Maimonides (1135–1204), a rationalist living in the medieval milieu of the Muslim philosophers, but still a great believer in the mystical approach to God, spent considerable energy harmonizing these two perspectives. On the one hand, he believed in prophecy – in its power to raise an individual to a knowledge that cannot be gained from rational, philosophic activities. On the other, he was an Aristotelian rationalist who attempted to systematize and categorize the beliefs in God. His thirteen principles of faith, which appear in his commentary to the tenth chapter of the *Mishnah* on the tractate *Sanhedrin,* summarize his beliefs concerning God, and the appropriate worship of Him. Over time, these have evolved into a definitive statement of faith and have been included in the Jewish prayer book under the title *Ani Ma'amin* (I believe). They are:

> The existence of God;
> The unity of God;
> The incorporeality of God;
> The eternity of God;
> The validity of prophecy;
> Moses was the greatest of the prophets;
> The divine origin of truth;
> The eternal validity of the *Torah;*
> God knows the deeds of men (omniscience);
> He punishes and rewards in the afterlife;

He will send a Messiah;
The resurrection of the dead.

Jewish Prayer Book; cf. HGKA pp.194–95, HJPJ p.162

The oneness of God has remained the cornerstone of Jewish belief throughout the ages. In medieval times, for instance, the infinite quality of His oneness is described abstractly in the Kabbalah. The Kabbalists called the supreme Godhead the *Ayn-Sof,* the Infinite, which encompasses, permeates and sustains all existence:

> Before anything emanated, there was only *Ayn-Sof* (the Infinite). *Ayn-Sof* was all that existed. Similarly, after It brought into being that which exists, there is nothing but It. You cannot find anything that exists apart from It. There is nothing that is not pervaded by the power of divinity. If there were, *Ayn-Sof* would be limited, subject to duality. Rather, God is everything that exists.... It is present in everything, and everything comes into being from It. Nothing is devoid of Its divinity. Everything is within It; It is within everything and outside of everything. There is nothing but It.
>
> *Moses Cordovero, Elimah Rabbati, EMC 24d–25a, in EKH p.24*

From biblical accounts of early Jewish history, it becomes clear that the Israelites perceived their relationship with God to be intensely personal and exclusive. According to numerous biblical stories, God intervenes in the mundane, personal lives of the patriarchs, giving them instructions and guidance. Stories are related of His involvement with the Jewish people as a whole, generally through the medium of the patriarchs and prophets. This is a God who reveals himself in history, not an abstract concept, though the later philosophers and mystics may have described Him in more or less abstract terms.

The relationship of the Jews with God is established in the covenant with Abraham (Abram):

> And when Abram was ninety nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, I am the almighty God; walk before me, and be perfect.... And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you, and to your seed after you.
>
> *Genesis 17:1, 7, JCL*

According to the terms of the covenant, God promises Abraham that he will multiply his descendants into a great and mighty nation, and give them the land of Canaan,[2] a land later described to Moses as "flowing with milk and

honey".[3] But Abraham must promise total devotion and faithfulness to worship of the one God. Later Jewish mystical commentators viewed Abraham as a mystic, interpreting the story allegorically, and viewing Abraham's covenant with God as his entry into a relationship with God's divine and mystic Name. The primary Kabbalist text, the *Zohar*, says that the covenant marks the time that Abraham became united with the higher Wisdom, or the Name of God.[4]

The worship of the one God that Abraham taught to his descendants and disciples, therefore, was most probably an inner worship of the Name of God, with which he had been united at the time of the covenant. Mystically, this is the true monotheism – inner, spiritual worship of the one divine Principle that is everlasting and sustains all. Throughout Jewish history as related in the Bible, God refers to Himself as the God of the Israelites' fathers, of their history, who has come to fulfil His covenant with them. The revelation of His divine teaching to Moses on Mount Sinai following the exodus from Egypt is the epitome of God's intervention in the lives of the Israelites.

According to the biblical stories, the prophets often speak directly to God, and He to them. Often the prophets convey God's frustration with the misbehaviour and unfaithfulness of the children of Israel, and his need to punish and correct them. The portrayal of God as angry and vengeful is understood by Jewish sages as the expression of a father's love for his children. Out of love, He established the covenant and, out of love, He needs to punish them to correct them when they stray from the ideals He has set before them. But He also promises to rescue them. All along, through the prophets, He tells them that even when He has to punish them, He will eventually gather them back to His bosom.

The prophet Isaiah, for instance, writes of the one God who reveals himself and His love through the history of the Israelites:

> But now thus says the Lord who created you, O Jacob,
> and he who formed you, O Israel,
> "Fear not, for I have redeemed you:
> I have called you by your name; you are mine.
> When you pass through the waters, I will be with you,
> and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you;
> When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned,
> nor shall the flame kindle upon you.
> For I am the Lord your God,
> the Holy One of Israel, your saviour....
> Fear not, for I am with you:
> I will bring your seed from the East,
> and gather you from the West;

I will say to the North, 'Give up,'
  and to the South, 'Keep not back:
  bring my sons from far,
  and my daughters from the ends of the earth;'
(Even) every one who is called by my Name,
  for I have created him for my glory,
I have formed him; yes, I have made him." …

"You are my witnesses," said the Lord,
  "and my servant whom I have chosen,
  that you may know and believe me,
  and understand that I am He.
Before me, there was no God formed,
  neither shall there be after me.
I, I myself, am the Lord,
  and beside me there is no saviour.
I have declared, and have saved,
  and I have proclaimed,
  and there was no strange god among you.
Therefore you are my witnesses,"
  said the Lord, "that I am God".

Isaiah 43:1–3, 5–7, 10–12, JCL

This personal relationship with God that the Israelites experienced is expressed through many biblical metaphors of love and submission. One of the most moving is the metaphor of the shepherd and his sheep. The relationship is tender, caring and simple:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
  I will fear no evil;
For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.
Surely goodness and lovingkindness shall follow me
  all the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Psalm 23:1–5, JCL

The sheep trust the shepherd implicitly. In the same way, the people express their trust in and devotion to God:

> Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.
> Serve the Lord with gladness,
> come before his presence with singing.
> Know that the Lord is God:
> it is He who made us, and we belong to Him;
> We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.
> Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,
> and into His courts with praise;
> Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.
> For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting;
> And His faithfulness endures to all generations.
>
> *Psalm 100:2–5, JCL*

The prophet Isaiah uses the example of the father and son, and the potter and his clay, to explain the degree of humility before God that is needed:

> But now, O Lord, You are our Father;
> We are the clay, and You our potter;
> And we are all the work of Your hand.
>
> *Isaiah 64:7, JCL*

Isaiah also writes that God is hidden – that He is hiding His face. Human beings feel distant from God when they sin, when they disobey Him. It is actually they who are withdrawing from God, but they feel as if He has withdrawn from them:

> But we are all as an unclean thing,
> and all our righteous actions are as filthy rags;
> And we all fade as a leaf;
> And our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.
> And there is none who calls upon Your name,
> who stirs up himself to take hold of You;
> For You have hidden Your face from us,
> and have consumed us, because of our iniquities.
>
> *Isaiah 64:5–7, JCL*

The prophets even write of God suffering with the people of Israel when they suffer. Although God has to punish and correct them when they stray from His ways, He loves them so much that He feels their pain:

> In all their affliction He was afflicted,
> and the angel of His presence saved them;
> In His love and in His pity He redeemed them;
> And he bore them, and carried them all the days of old.
>
> *Isaiah 63:9, JCL*

This theme was developed even further during the Talmudic period and in later Jewish mysticism – the Kabbalah – which also taught that God is in exile along with his 'chosen people'. These two notions of God – being in exile and being hidden – became associated with each other. The mystics of the Kabbalah wrote of the Godhead, the *Ayn-Sof,* as concealed and transcendent, His essence being revealed through the emanation of His qualities or aspects, which they called the *sefirot* (emanations). They emphasized that though there may be ten *sefirot,* the essence or divine energy that flows through them to the creation is the same. The *Shekhinah* (indwelling presence) was another term they used to describe the immanent or revealed aspect of God in the creation. The exile of the Divine was thus understood in two senses. Firstly, although present in the creation, He is not revealed; secondly, His immanent form, the *Shekhinah,* which goes into exile with the Jews, is revealed in the creation, but is exiled from its true home.

At all times in Jewish history, as when Jerusalem fell to the Romans in 70 CE, Jewish sages of the time have interpreted the events as a reflection of God's relationship with them. In the Middle Ages, they interpreted the suffering endured during the Spanish Inquisition as indicative of God's exile. The transcendent and concealed Godhead was then understood as a God in exile, almost as a tragic figure.

In the sixteenth century, Rabbi Isaac Luria taught the concept of *shevirat ha-kelim* (breaking of the vessels), through which the primal light of God became scattered into the creation, and thus God, as it were, went into exile. All souls are the sparks of the divine Light, a particle of the divine Source. They are an aspect of God that is trapped in the material creation. This is why human beings feel separation and yearn to go back to Him. Luria and other Kabbalists taught a process called *tikkun,* or salvation, intended to restore the correct balance between the spiritual qualities (the *sefirot*), and allow the sparks to return to their divine Source.

Some Jewish writers have said that God is essentially incomplete as long as the individual souls remain separate from Him. Thus, a contemporary Jewish philosopher, Abraham Joshua Heschel, summarizes the essence and the origins of Jewish religion:

> God's search of man, not man's quest for God, was conceived to have been the main event in Israel's history. This is at the core of all biblical thoughts: God is not a being detached from man to be sought after,

> but a power that seeks, pursues and calls upon man. The way to God is a way of God.... Man would not have known Him if He had not approached man. God's relation to man precedes man's relation to Him.
>
> *Abraham Joshua Heschel, God in Search of Man, GSM p.198*

See also: **Allāh**, **God**, **God (among the early Greeks)**, **God (in early Christianity)**, **God (in Indian thought)**, **Yahweh**.

1. *Genesis* 12:1.
2. *Genesis* 17:1*ff.*
3. *Exodus* 3:8, 8:8,17, 13:5, 33:3.
4. *Zohar* 1:89a, 97b.

Gopāl(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* cow *(go)* guardian *(pāl)*, protector of cows, cowherd; or, the Sustainer *(pāl)* of the earth *(go)*, Protector or Cherisher of the world, Nourisher of the universe; an epithet of Kṛishṇa; also used in the *Ādi Granth* as a name of God:

> O my fascinating Beloved, Beloved,
> Thou alone art the Cherisher of the world *(Gopāl)*:
> Thou art contained in worms, elephants, stones and other beings,
> and sustaineth all of them.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1231, MMS*

See also: **Goswāmī**, **Govinda**.

Goswāmī (S), **Gosāīn** (H/Pu), **Gusāīn** (Pu) *Lit.* cow *(go)* master *(swāmī, sāīn)*; master, keeper or protector of cattle; a cowherd; metaphorically, one who cares for another as a cowherd for his cattle; hence, lord, monarch, master, beloved; thus, Master of the Earth *(go)*; Lord of the universe; an epithet used for both the Lord and the Master:

> O Lord *(Gosāīn)*, I am helpless,
> You are the protector.
> You are the beloved of all beings.
>
> *Sahajobāī, Bānī, Rāg Bilāwal 3, SBB p.56*

And:

> I have abandoned all mine avocations:
> I serve the true Lord of the universe *(Gosāīn)*.

I have firmly tied to my skirt, His Name,
the home of nine treasures.

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 73, MMS

Gosāīn is sometimes used as a title for holy men, as in Gosāīn Tulsīdās.

See also: **Govinda**, **Keshava**, **Kṛishṇa** (4.2), **Shepherd**.

Govind(a) (S/H), **Gobind** (H/Pu) A common epithet for Kṛishṇa as a personification of God, according to the legend of Kṛishṇa as a keeper of the cattle at Gokula, or as the divine protector of mankind and giver of salvation; hence, an epithet of God.

The derivation is uncertain, and various possibilities have been suggested. The orthodox view derives the name from the Sanskrit *go* (cow) + *vid* (to find), thus 'cow finder'. However, *go* also means heaven, hence, 'he who obtains heaven'. Others derive the word from the Prakrit *go* (cow) + *inda* (lord), thus 'lord of cows' or 'chief herdsman', the 'b' being added for phonetic reasons. In the latter case, the Sanskrit equivalent would be *gopendra*.

Govinda is commonly used as an epithet of Kṛishṇa:

I worship the primeval Lord, *Govinda,*
who is always seen by the devotee
whose eyes are anointed with the pulp of love.
He is seen in His eternal form of Shyāmasundara (Kṛishṇa),
situated within the heart of the devotee.

Brahma Saṃhitā 5:38, in BGA p.339

Lift the heart up to *Govinda,*
lift the heart up to *Govinda,*
lift the heart up to *Govinda,* O foolish mind!
When you are at death's door,
the rules of grammar you are trying to master
will be of no avail.

Shankara, Bhaja Govindam 1; cf. BGR p.3

Gobind is also commonly used for God in Indian spiritual literature:

O Lord of the world *(Gobind),* O Cherisher of the universe *(Gopāl),*
O my compassionate Beloved:
Thou art the Lord of the vital breath *(prān),*
the comrade of the masterless,
and the destroyer of the pain of the poor.

O my omnipotent, unfathomable and omnipresent Lord,
show Thou mercy unto me.
Ferry Thou me across the very terrible, blind well (pit) of the world,
says Nānak.

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1273, MMS

And:

My great Lord *(Govind)* is unapproachable, incomprehensible,
primal, immaculate and formless.

Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 448, MMS

Personifications of God or the Master as a protector of sheep, goats or cattle are common metaphors in the ancient literature of India and the Middle East. Zarathushtra spoke of the Master as the *Vāstrya* (Protector) and *Fshuyant* (Shepherd); in the ancient Mesopotamian cult of *Tammuz, Tammuz* was a shepherd; the Greek God Apollo was worshipped as a goatherd; and the term is very common in the Bible, and throughout Judaic and Christian literature.

See also: **Goswāmī**, **Keshava**, **Kṛishṇa** (4.2), **Shepherd**.

Great Glory An epithet of God especially favoured by the Jewish *Merkavah* mystical writers, as in the *Testament of Levi,* probably from the second century BCE:

In the uppermost heaven of all dwells the Great Glory,
in the holy of holies superior to all holiness.

Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs (Levi) 3:4, OTP1 p.789

The epithet is also used in *1 Enoch,* where – in a traditional revelational text – the prophet Enoch sees God in a vision, seated on His throne:

And I looked, and saw inside it a lofty throne: its appearance was as crystal, and the wheels were like the shining sun, and there was the vision of cherubim. And from beneath the great throne issued streams of flaming fire, so that I could not look at it. And the Great Glory sat thereon, and His raiment shone more brightly than the sun and was whiter than any snow. None of the angels were able to enter, and see the face of the Excellent and Glorious One; and no bodily eye could gaze on Him, for a flaming fire surrounded Him, and a great fire stood before Him, and none around could draw near to Him.

1 Enoch 14:18–22; cf. BE p.42, OTP1 p.21

Similar early Christian texts, like the *Ascension of Isaiah*, a book clearly influenced by the style of Judaic revelations, also use the term. In this book, 'Isaiah' is taken up by an angel until he sees God Himself:

> And the eyes of my spirit were open, and I beheld the Great Glory; but I could not then look upon Him, nor could the angel who was with me, nor any of the angels I had seen worshipping my Lord. Yet I saw the righteous gazing intently upon the Glory. And my Lord (and the angel of the Spirit too) came near me and said, "Privileged indeed are you to have been allowed to see God."
>
> *Ascension of Isaiah 9:37–39; cf. AOT pp.805–6, OTP2 p.172*

As an expression, 'great glory' also appears frequently as a simple description either of God's or the soul's glory in the higher heavens, as in the *Sibylline Oracles:*

> Happy will be those of mankind on earth
> who will love the great God,
> blessing Him before drinking and eating,
> putting their trust in piety.
> They will reject all temples when they see them,
> altars too, useless foundations of dumb stones, …
> defiled with the blood of animate creatures,
> and sacrifices of four-footed animals.
> They will look to the great glory of the one God.
>
> *Sibylline Oracles 4:24–30, OTP1 p.384*

And:

> A good end and very great glory await you,
> as immortal God decreed for you.
> But, you, remain trusting in the holy laws of the great God,
> whenever He may lift your wearied knee upright to the Light.
>
> *Sibylline Oracles 3:282–85, OTP1 p.368*

In other places, 'great glory' refers to the radiance of some particular angel, as of *Metatron* in *3 Enoch.*[1]

See also: **hod, kavod**.

1. *3 Enoch* 6.

Great Life A Mandaean term for God.

See **Life**.

Great One A Mandaean and gnostic term for God, as in a Mandaean text where the ardent devotee is described:

> Filled with light were his eyes
> on beholding the Great One in the house of perfection.
>
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 90, CPM p.94*

One of the gnostic or perhaps Pythagorean writers of early Christian times says that the "Great One" and the creative Power are the only ones who truly exist. All else is illusion:

> Both the Great One exists,
> and he who is next to be the Great One exists (*i.e.* the Word).
>
> *Sentences of Sextus 33:376b, NHS28 pp.318–19*

Another gnostic writer speaks of the "Great One" who can make Himself known, but only if He so wills. Otherwise, He remains hidden:

> If this One, who is unknowable in His nature, to whom pertain all the greatnesses which I already mentioned, if out of the abundance of His sweetness He wishes to grant knowledge so that He might be known, He has the ability to do so. He has his Power, which is His will.
>
> Now, however, in silence He Himself holds back – He who is the Great One, who is the cause of bringing the Totalities (realms of creation) into … being.
>
> *Tripartite Tractate 55, NHS22 pp.198–99*

In the gnostic text known as the *Pistis Sophia,* the lords or rulers of the various inner regions are also called the "great ones".[1]

See also: **al-Kabīr**.

1. *Pistis Sophia* 40:28, 248:100, *PS* pp.80–81, 496–97, *PSGG* pp.32, 206.

Great Spirit (Native North American) A common expression for the Supreme Being in various Native North American languages. Black Elk (Hehaka

Sapa, 1863–1950), a Lakota Sioux holy man of the Oglala tribe, from Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota, writes that this Great Spirit *(Wakan-Tanka)* is to be found in everything, and is yet "above all these things":

> We should understand well that all things are the works of the Great Spirit. We should know that He is within all things: the trees, the grasses, the rivers, the mountains, and all the four-legged animals, and the winged peoples; and even more important, we should understand that He is also above all these things and peoples. When we do understand all this deeply in our hearts, then we will fear, and love, and know the Great Spirit, and then we will be and act and live as He intends.
>
> *Black Elk, in SP p.xx*

Black Elk also says that this Great Spirit dwells at the "centre of the universe", but that "this centre is really everywhere." Yet, "it is within each of us." It is from this Great Spirit that all peace comes:

> The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of men when they realize their relationship, their oneness, with the universe and all its powers; and when they realize that at the centre of the universe dwells the *Wakan-Tanka,* and that this centre is really everywhere; it is within each of us. This is the real peace, and the others are but reflections of this.
>
> The second peace is that which is made between two individuals, and the third is that which is made between two nations. But, above all, you should understand that there can never be peace between nations until there is first known that true peace which, as I have often said, is within the souls of men.
>
> *Black Elk, in SP p.115*

hadar (He) *Lit.* glory, majesty; glorious splendour, glorious majesty; generally used with the term *hod,* as *hod ve-hadar* (glorious majesty).

See also: **hod**.

Hādī, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Guide, the Drawer; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh;* in the *Qur'ān* as *al-Hādi,* where it is said that it is God who guides and God who misguides (*al-Muḍill,* the Misleader), drawing to Himself whom He wills:

And that those on whom knowledge has been bestowed
may learn that the *(Qur'ān)* is the Truth from thy Lord,
and that they may believe therein,
and their hearts may be made humbly (open) to it:
For verily, *Allāh* is the Guide *(al-Hādi)*,
of those who believe, to the straight way.

Qur'ān 22:54, AYA

God, who is both *al-Hādī* and *al-Muḍill*,[1] has ordained that human beings shall be pulled in opposite directions by the inclination of the spirit *(khāṭir al-rūḥ)* and the inclination of their lower nature *(khāṭir al-nafs)*.

See also: **Allāh**, **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

1. *Qur'ān* 2:26.

Ḥāfiẓ, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Guardian, the Protector, the Preserver, the Keeper; an Islamic epithet of God:

God is the best guardian *(ḥāfiẓ)*,
and He is the most merciful of the merciful.

Qur'ān 12:64, KI

A verb form of the term is also used in the *Qur'ān*, where *Allāh* is portrayed as the one who guards His divine Word or "Message":

We *(Allāh)* have without doubt, sent down the Message *(Dhikr)*;
And we will assuredly guard *(laḥāfiẓūn)* it (from corruption).

Qur'ān 15:9, AYA

In common usage, *ḥāfiẓah* means memory, and a special meaning of *ḥāfiẓ* is one who has memorized the *Qur'ān* or the *Ḥadīth*.

hāhūt, al- (A/P) The absolute divinity, in Sufi doctrine; the essential Name of God; also known as *'ālam al-hāhūt*. Probably derived from *Hu* (He), *hāhūt* has no literal or everyday meaning. According to common Sufi terminology, *hāhūt* is the highest of five stages, realms or planes of consciousness. In descending order these stages are:

Al-hāhūt	The absolute Divinity.
Al-lahūt	The divine Being.

Al-jabarūt	The realm of power, the causal realm.
Al-malakūt	The realm of angels, the astral realm.
Al-nāsūt	The human and corporeal realm.

Different Sufis, however, have described variations on this theme. 'Ināyat Khān calls *hāhūt* a plane of "consciousness":

> In this, the consciousness touches the innermost depth of its own being; it is like touching the feet of God.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK4 pp.202–3*

Generally, *al-hāhūt* has been used by Sufis for the highest possible spiritual attainment. Sometimes, however, the realms *('ālamīn)* are described as only four, *nāsūt, malakūt, jabarūt* and *lāhūt,* with *lāhūt* (divinity) representing a polar opposite to *nāsūt* (mankind, in its limited and physical aspect). Some Sufis, on the other hand, add *hūt al-hūt* and/or *hūt* above *hāhūt.*

The term *hāhūt* is also used to refer to the highest form of Sufi remembrance *(dhikr).*

hairat(-rūp) (H/Pu) *Lit.* form *(rūp)* of wonder *(hairat);* the embodiment of wonder or bewilderment; a Persian- *(ḥayrat)* Indian *(rūp)* hybrid term; an expression used by Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh to describe the supreme Lord, *Anāmī Purush* or *Rādhā Swāmī:*

> His is a form of wonder *(hairat-rūp),*
> unfathomable and everlasting.
> Such is my beloved Lord of the Soul *(Rādhā Swāmī).*
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 3:1.2, SBP p.8*

And:

> Wonder, wonder, wonder *(hairat)* is He:
> He has assumed a form of wonder *(hairat-rūp).*
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 38:12.11, SBP p.351*

Ḥakīm, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Wise, the Wise One; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh.* In Islam, a *ḥakīm* is a wise man, a sage, a philosopher or a doctor. *Al-Ḥakīm* is a name commonly used for *Allāh* in the *Qur'ān:*

> This is the true account:
> there is no God except *Allāh;*

And *Allāh* – He is indeed
the Exalted in Power,
the Wise *(al-Ḥakīm).*

Qur'ān 3:62, AYA

And:

He knoweth the Unseen
as well as that which is open.
For He is the Wise *(al-Ḥakīm),*
well acquainted (with all things).

Qur'ān 6:73, AYA

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

Ḥaqq, al- (A/P/U) *Lit.* true, real, right *(ḥaqq);* hence, the True, the Real, the Truth, the Reality *(al-Ḥaqq);* implies that which is permanent, proven, stable, eternally unchanging; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh;* the term is common in the *Qur'ān:*

High above all is *Allāh,*
the King, the Truth *(al-Ḥaqq)!*

Qur'ān 20:114, AYA

That, then, is God, your Lord, the True *(al-Ḥaqq);*
What is there, after Truth *(al-Ḥaqq),* but error?
Then how are you turned about?

Qur'ān 10:32, KI

This is so, because *Allāh*
is the Reality *(al-Ḥaqq)!*

Qur'ān 22:6, AYA

Al-Ḥaqq is probably the name for God used most often among Sufis:

> *Allāh* is the Truth, whose being is ever unchanged. *Ḥaqq* is that whose essence is valid in itself, and whose essence is the cause and is necessary for all other existence.... He is eternal.
>
> *Shaykh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti, The Most Beautiful Names, MBN p.68*

Mystically, *al-Ḥaqq* means that which is eternal and unchanging. *Al-Ḥaqq* is not subject to change or dissolution. Truth is not subject to any force outside itself.

Just as the one God, who is real, permanent and unchanging is called *al-Ḥaqq,* so all lesser or false deities are called *bāṭil,* meaning vain or unreal. That is, all others are changeable and subject to dissolution. All other beings are considered 'unreal' because all other beings owe their reality or existence to Him.

Further, while everything in the creation is known by its opposite, *al-Ḥaqq* is the only thing with no opposite, since everything is contained within It:

> Things becomes apparent from their opposites,
> but *Ḥaqq* has neither an equal nor an opposite!
> Since there is neither an equal nor a likeness to the essence of *Ḥaqq,*
> how can the philosopher know anything of Him?
> Since appearances are known by their essence,
> His Essence cannot be known by appearances.
> The whole of creation is visible by His light and radiance:
> how then can He become evident in the world?
> How ignorant is he who seeks the radiant sun in the desert,
> in daylight, but with the light of a candle!
>
> *Shabistarī, Gulshan-i Rāz (Introduction), GR pp.42–43*

Al-Ḥaqq is the one Lord, beyond all names and attributes, the essential Truth and Reality:

> By *Ḥaqq* the *Ṣūfīs* mean God, for *Ḥaqq* is one of the names of God, as He has said: "This is because God is the Truth *(al-Ḥaqq).*"[1]
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XXIV, KM p.384*

Since God is *al-Ḥaqq,* what comes from Him is also *Ḥaqq* (Truth):

> The Truth *(al-Ḥaqq)* (comes) from thy Lord alone:
> so be not of those who doubt.
>
> *Qur'ān 3:60, AYA*

The *Qur'ān* states that people reject the Truth *(Ḥaqq)* that comes from the Lord. But no one should force another person to accept it; for this, too, is in His will:

> But thy people reject this,
> though it is the Truth *(al-Ḥaqq).*
> Say: "Not mine is the responsibility
> for arranging your affairs."
>
> *Qur'ān 6:66, AYA*

The *Qur'ān* equates *al-Ḥaqq* with God's Word. Mystically, this is the creative Power of God:

> It is He who created the heavens and the earth
> in true *(bi al-ḥaqqi)* (proportions):
> The day He says, "Be!"
> Behold! It is.
> His Word is the Truth *(al-Ḥaqq).*
>
> *Qur'ān 6:73; cf. AYA*

In the end, says the *Qur'ān,* people will realize their error in not following the Creative Word, which is *al-Ḥaqq* (the Truth) and is in *al-Ḥaqq* (God). The lesser 'truths' they tried to follow will leave them in the lurch without *al-Ḥaqq:*

> And from each people shall We draw a witness,
> and We shall say:
> "Produce your Proof":
> Then shall they know
> that the Truth *(al-Ḥaqq)* is in *Allāh* (alone),
> and the (lies) which they invented
> will leave them in the lurch.
>
> *Qur'ān 28:75, AYA*

Ḥāfiẓ, the great fourteenth-century Persian mystic poet, points out that the preachers of organized religion have no knowledge of the Truth *(al-Ḥaqq)* that the mystics follow:

> Our preacher has not scented
> the aroma of Truth *(Ḥaqq);*
> Take note: I will say this in his presence;
> I do not mean to talk behind his back.
>
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.183, DHM (404:3) p.368, DIH p.309; cf. in SSE3 p.3*

Describing the nature of the Perfect Man *(al-Insān al-Kāmil),* Sufis explained that he is both *Ḥaqq* (Truth, Reality, God) and *khalq* (phenomenal).

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**, **al-Ḥaqīqah** (2.2).

1. *Qur'ān* 22:6.

Ḥaqqīyah (A/P) *Lit.* that which relates to *ḥaqq* (truth); Truth, Reality; a feminine form of *Ḥaqq* (Truth, Reality); though an awkward construction in English,

the literal sense is 'truth-ness'; also, the seventh and highest of the *laṭā'if* (subtle centres) in man, in the terminology of the *Kubrāwī* mystic, Simnānī.

See also: **al-Ḥaqq, laṭā'if** (5.1).

harbour, harbour of Life, harbour of peace, harbour of the immortals A harbour is a sheltered port, a place of refuge and safety; mystically, these terms are a part of a family of nautical metaphors from early Christian times, in which souls are said to board a ship of light and sail to the eternal realm, the harbour of Life, guided by the divine Helmsman, the Master. It is found, for instance, in the Manichaean psalms:

> He (the Saviour) will bring them (safely)
> to the harbour of the immortals.
> *Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.152*

And:

> Walk ... in joy, drawn to the land of light,
> sealed with your seal and with your unfading garlands.
> Walk also in gladness: your sufferings have passed today;
> Lo, the harbour of peace – you have moored in it.
> *Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.163*

It also occurs in the hymns of Ephraim Syrus, where – addressing Jesus – "your glorious Tree" is the Tree of Life, the Creative Word that brings souls to eternity:

> Your glorious Tree has come to the harbour of Life.
> *Ephraim Syrus, ESHS4 601:15; cf. MEM p.98*

Sometimes, the harbour refers to the protection or refuge afforded by a Master of the Word, as in one of the Manichaean psalms. When the soul has found such a Master, it can be said that the ships of light have come to the harbour. All that is now required is for the soul to go aboard and commence the voyage back to God:

> Lo, the ships are moored for you,
> the barks are in the harbour.
> Take your merchandise aboard
> and sail to your habitations.
> *Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.147*

Similarly, in the *Acts of Thomas*, Judas Thomas describes Jesus as the:

> Port and harbour of them
> that pass through the regions of the rulers.
>
> *Acts of Thomas 156, ANT p.432*

See also: **Helmsman** (▸2).

Har ha-Elohim Ḥoreb (He) *Lit.* Mount *(Har)* of God *Ḥoreb (ha-Elohim Ḥoreb).*

See **holy mount**.

har ha-kodesh, har kodesh (He) *Lit.* holy *(kodesh)* mountain *(har);* the holy mount; biblical terms for the place of God; eternity.

See also: **holy mount, Kadosh**.

Hari (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* the Remover, from the Sanskrit root *hṛi* (to take away, to remove); a name for a deity or God as the Remover of sin, ignorance and suffering, and the Giver of consolation. In Sanskrit literature, *Hari* refers to *Shiva* and to a number of other deities, especially *Vishṇu,* when understood as the Supreme Being:

> This *Hari,* who is the most immediate
> of all the energies of *Brahman,*
> is His embodied form, composed entirely of His essence;
> And in Him therefore is the whole world underwoven;
> And from Him and in Him is the universe;
> And He, the supreme Lord of all,
> comprising all that is perishable and imperishable,
> bears upon Himself all material and spiritual existence.
>
> *Vishṇu Purāṇa 1:22; cf. VP p.129*

As a name of the Supreme Being, *Hari* is used extensively in later Indian mystic literature. Tulsīdās speaks of *Hari* as the one who removes illusion and spiritual ignorance:

> O God *(Hari),* why do You not eliminate the great delusion?
> For as long as You do not shower Your grace,
> although the world is false, it appears true....

This is the extremity of delusion, O Lord *(Hari):*
although we can see, hear, describe and understand it,
yet doubt and delusion do not leave us.
Tulsīdās, Vinayapatrikā, Pad 120:1, 121:1, VTD pp.197–98

Hari Rāi (H/Pu) *Lit.* Lord *(Hari)* King *(Rāi);* God the King; the supreme Ruler of all; a name of God frequently used in the *Ādi Granth:*

God the King *(Hari Rāi)* is the dispeller of sin,
the destroyer of dread, and the ocean of peace.
Merciful to the meek and the killer of pain:
Him, O Nānak, ever contemplate thou.
Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 927, MMS

har mo'ed (He) *Lit.* mountain *(har)* of the appointed time or place *(mo'ed).*

See **holy mount**.

Ḥayy, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Living; the Living One; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh.* God is life itself. He is the life that enlivens the universe. Hence, He is the ever living One:

God! *(Allāh!)* There is no god but He,
the Living *(al-Ḥayy),* the Everlasting.
Slumber seizes Him not, neither sleep;
To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth.
Qur'ān 2:255, KI

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**, **Living One** (▸2).

heavenly Father See **Father**.

heavenly Jerusalem, holy Jerusalem See **Jerusalem**.

Height The topmost or supreme point; mystically, the eternal realm, God, the Most High; usually as 'the Height', a term commonly found in early Middle Eastern mystic writings, especially those of Judaism, Christianity, Manichaeism and Mandaeanism; contrasted with the abyss or the Pit, which nor-

mally refers to this world; also called, 'the Depth'. The term is used in the psalms (*c.* 150 BCE) found among the Dead Sea Scrolls:

I thank Thee, O Lord,
for Thou hast redeemed my soul from the Pit;
And, from the hell of *Abaddon*,
Thou hast raised me up to (the) everlasting Height.

Thanksgiving Hymns XI:15–20 (10), CDSS p.261

It is also encountered in the esoteric literature of early Christianity. In the *Acts of Thomas*, Jesus is described as:

The Ambassador that was sent from the Height,
and came down even unto hell;
Who opened the doors, and brought up thence
them that for many ages had been shut up
in the treasury of darkness;
And showed them the way
that leads up unto the Height.

Acts of Thomas 10; cf. ANT p.369

The term is also found in Manichaean writings:

Many are the labours that I suffered
while I was in this dark house (the body).
You, therefore, my true light, enlighten me within.
Set me up, for I have tumbled down,
and help me with you to the Height.
Be not far from me,
O Physician that has the Medicines of Life....
Heal me of the grievous wound of lawlessness.

Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.152

And:

Let us also make ourselves pure
that we may make our voyage....
The ship of Jesus will make its way up to the Height.
It will bring its cargo to the shore,
and return for them that are left behind....
He will bring them (safely)
to the harbour of the immortals.

Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.152

And again, where the Saviour is 'speaking':

> Hence, spirit, come! ...
> I shall lead you to the Height,
> (to your native abode)....
> Remember, O spirit!
> Look on the anguish that you have borne
> through the fury of all your ravagers.
>
> *Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VII:15, 17; cf. MHCP pp.158–59*

The term is also commonly used in gnostic texts:

> You will go to the Height; you will enter into all the regions of all the great emanations of the Light, and become rulers (kings) in the eternal kingdom of the Light.
>
> *Pistis Sophia 252:100; cf. PS pp.504–5, PSGG p.209*

See also: **Depth**.

hekhal (He) (pl. *hekhalot*) *Lit.* palace, temple, mansion, hall; the innermost sanctuary or Temple of the cultic religion of the ancient Israelites; mystically, the highest spiritual realm, the abode of the Supreme Being that exists within each person, from where His love, protective power and sustaining energy radiate.

There are many allusions among the biblical psalms to the soul's yearning for God's comfort, and of God reaching out to him from His sanctuary (His abode) at the highest spiritual level:

> In my distress I called upon the Lord,
> and cried unto my God;
> He heard my voice out of His temple *(hekhal),*
> and my cry came before Him, even into His ears.
>
> *Psalm 18:6, KJV*

The plural form, *hekhalot,* is used for seven spiritual stages within the seventh heaven, known as *hekhal ha-Melekh* (the palace of the King) or *hekhal ha-kodesh* (the holy sanctuary). *Hekhalot* was used first and primarily by Jewish mystics of the Talmudic and early *geonic* period (third to seventh centuries CE) in Israel and Babylonia. These sages describe the spiritual ascent of the soul through the lower heavens until, entering the seventh, it ascends from one palace to the next, finally entering the highest or seventh world of the divine throne, where it contemplates the divine Being seated there.

See also: **Hekhalot mystics** (▸2).

hekhal ha-kodesh (He) *Lit.* holy *(kodesh)* temple or sanctuary *(hekhal).*

See **hekhal**.

hekhal ha-Melekh (He) *Lit.* palace *(hekhal)* of the King *(ha-Melekh).*

See **hekhal**.

héng (héng) (C) *Lit.* eternal, everlasting, forever; used interchangeably with *ch'áng*, in some Taoist texts, for that which is eternal, permanent and enduring. In common usage, *héng* generally adds a sense of increased endurance or everlastingness, as in the compound term, *yŭng héng* (abiding forever).

See also: **ch'áng**.

ḥesed (He) *Lit.* love; particularly, steadfast, loyal or dedicated love; loving-kindness, devotion, grace; sometimes translated into English as piety or righteousness in a moral sense, but this depicts only a part of the term's breadth of meaning. *Ḥesed* is used in the Bible, particularly in the *Psalms*, as an epithet of the supreme Lord, describing His quality of love and grace:

> But Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion,
> and gracious, long-suffering,
> and bountiful in love *(ḥesed)* and truth.
>
> *Psalm 86:15, KB*

> But as for me, I will come into Thy house
> in the multitude of Thy love *(ḥesed):*
> And in the fear (awe, vision) of Thee
> will I worship towards Thy holy temple.
>
> *Psalm 5:8, KB*

Ḥesed is also the name of one of the *sefirot* (divine emanations or qualities) according to the Kabbalist description of the divine creative process.

See also: **Ḥesed** (4.1, ▸2).

hod (He) *Lit.* majesty, glory; a quality of God; an emanation of the divine Essence; a biblical term, used especially in the *Psalms* and later by the Kabbalists; similar in meaning to *kavod.* Some Jewish interpreters understood *hod,* like *kavod,* to refer to the awe-inspiring and brilliant manifestation of the divine presence, interpreting various biblical passages in this way. Speaking of the physical "heavens", the psalmist writes of the "glory" of God that transcends this world:

> O Lord, our Lord,
> how majestic is Your name in all the earth,
> who has set Your glory *(hod)* above the heavens.
>
> *Psalm 8:2, JCL*

Here, "Your name" may simply be a way of addressing God, or could perhaps be intended as a reference to the mystic, Holy Name.

Similarly, the prophet Isaiah speaks of "the glory of His Voice" in a manner that could perhaps refer to the mystic Voice, the creative Power:

> And the Lord shall cause the glory of His Voice *(hod Kolo)* to be heard, and shall show the descending blow of His arm, with the indignation of His anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with cloudburst, and tempest, and hailstones.
>
> *Isaiah 30:30; cf. JCL*

Hod is commonly linked with *hadar,* as *hod ve-hadar* (glory and splendour, honour and majesty):

> For all the gods of the nations are idols,
> but the Lord made the heavens.
> Honour and majesty *(hod ve-hadar)* are before Him,
> strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.
>
> *Psalm 96:5–6, JCL*

> Bless the Lord, O my soul.
> O Lord my God, You are very great;
> You are clothed with glory and majesty *(hod ve-hadar),*
> who covers Himself with light as with a garment,
> who stretches out the heavens like a curtain.
>
> *Psalm 104:1–2, JCL*

Hod is also combined with *malkut* as *hod malkut* (glory of majesty, glorious majesty).

The Kabbalists used *Hod* for one of the ten *sefirot,* the divine aspects or qualities that emanated from the infinite Godhead and which, through their interplay, brought creation into being.

See also: **kavod**.

holy land Palestine; the promised land; mystically, the eternity of God, "flowing with milk and honey",[1] stemming from the *Exodus* story understood as an allegory in which the captive children of Israel (souls in the creation) make good their escape from Egypt (the physical universe) to find the holy land, with the help of their Saviour, Moses. The story was generally understood in this manner by the various gnostic groups, and the term is also found in the Manichaean texts from Chinese Turkestan. In one of these hymns, translated from the Chinese, the unknown poet – petitioning the perfect Saint and the creative Power as the "precious Tree" of Life – prays:

> O ever flourishing precious Tree, the ocean of Nature and Life:
> listen mercifully to my true petition:
> Your name belongs to the boundless fame of the holy land,
> and your skill belongs to the boundless skill of the holy soil.
> Compassionate Father of all the natures of light (souls),
> merciful Mother of all the robbed!
> Now save me from the jackals and wolves
> as was promised by the Jesus of the Light.
>
> The great Saint is naturally an infinite treasure,
> containing in full every kind of precious rarity,
> (opening) for distribution among all the poor and the needy:
> each of whom will be satisfied according to his wish....
>
> I petition only that Jesus will have mercy,
> and liberate me from the bondage of all devils and spirits.
> I am now living in the pit of fire:
> quickly guide me into the peace of the clean and pure land! ...
>
> Put me into the fragrantly flowering forest of the pure Law;
> Put me among the flocks of the clean, pure and gentle lambs.
> Let my foundation of faith be always firm and strong;
> Let me be able to enter the admirable land.
>
> *Manichaean Hymns; cf. LSMH pp.176–77:12–14, 179:35, 183:78*

See also: **Egypt** (6.2), **land**, **promised land**.

1. *Deuteronomy* 6:3, 11:9, 26:9,15, 27:3, 31:20; *Ezekiel* 20:6,15; *Exodus* 3:8, 8:8,17, 13:5, 33:3; *Jeremiah* 11:5, 32:33; *Joshua* 5:6; *Leviticus* 20:24; *Numbers* 13:27, 14:8, 16:13–14; see also *Genesis* 17:1*ff.*

holy mount, holy mountain (He. *har kodesh*) Physically, Zion, the hill on which Jerusalem is built; mystically, the divine eternity, just as Jerusalem itself (particularly as the heavenly Jerusalem), the Temple and its holy of holies have also been similarly used. Terms for mountains have commonly been used for the heavenly regions in Judaic, Christian, Manichaean and other Eastern mystical literature.

Har kodesh and *har kodshi* (mountain of my holiness) are common biblical terms, mountain and hill symbolizing the unshakability and transcendence of God, together with a sense of the refuge, strength and solace He provides. The word *har* (mountain) is from the same root as *ẓur* (rock), another epithet for God in the ancient Hebrew and Middle Eastern literature. Allied terms include *har mo'ed* (mountain of the appointed time or place), *Har Ẓion* (Mount Zion) and *har Yahweh* (mountain of God).

In the biblical *Psalms,* Zion is commonly called the holy mountain. It is not always possible, however, to know the original intent of the psalmist, especially when the psalm includes events in Jewish history, the meaning of which could be intended either literally or metaphorically. Even so, there is little doubt in some cases as to the meaning. Judaism, for instance, did not teach that there was a God who lived physically in the mountains above Jerusalem, yet the psalmist writes:

> Loudly I cry to *Yahweh,*
> and He answers me from his holy mountain.
>
> *Psalm 3:4, JB*

Similarly, in the forty-third psalm, the psalmist is writing of the longing for God and the desire to live in complete surrender to Him, free from domination by the "enemy" – human imperfection – in order to find God's inner dwelling place, His "holy mountain":

> It is You, God, who are my shelter:
> why do You abandon me?
> Why must I walk so mournfully,
> oppressed by the enemy?
>
> Send out Your light and Your Truth,
> let these be my guide,
> to lead me to Your holy mountain
> and to the place where You live.
>
> *Psalm 43:2–3, JB*

In another psalm, purity of heart is emphasized as an essential for entering the divine dwelling ("Your tent") or living in communion with God ("on Your holy mountain"):

> *Yahweh*, who has the right to enter Your tent,
> or to live on Your holy mountain?
>
> The man whose way of life is blameless,
> who always does what is right,
> who speaks the truth from his heart,
> whose tongue is not used for slander;
> Who does no wrong to his fellow,
> casts no discredit on his neighbour,
> looks with contempt on the reprobate,
> but honours those who fear *Yahweh;*
> Who stands by his pledge at any cost,
> does not ask interest on loans,
> and cannot be bribed to victimize the innocent.
> If a man does all this, nothing can ever shake him.
>
> *Psalm 15:1–5, JB*

Following the established Jewish tradition, the later Sufis also interpreted biblical stories allegorically. The seventeenth-century Sulṭān Bāhū writes:

> O ignorant one, do you know
> what the Ṭūr-i Sīnā (Mount Sinai) was?
> By it was meant your heart.
> Like Moses, you should become enraptured with that light.
> Plead, "O God, let me see your radiance,"
> and see the light of Truth.
>
> *Sulṭān Bāhū, Dīvān-i Bāhū 44, DB p.36, SBU p.69; cf. SBE p.40*

See also: **mountains** (4.1).

holy of holies (He. *kodesh kodashim*) Originally, the innermost compartment of the Jewish tabernacle in which was kept the Ark of the Covenant, containing the Ten Commandments written on stone and given by God to Moses, according to the story in the *Pentateuch*. Only the priests were permitted entry to the holy of holies. Later, the holy of holies became the innermost shrine in the Temple at Jerusalem, where the most sacred rituals were performed. Two Temples were built at Jerusalem, the second being destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE.

Just as Jerusalem has always been taken as symbolic of the heavenly realms or of the divine eternity itself, so too has the holy of holies been understood by mystics to represent either the innermost sanctuary of God Himself, or some other aspect of the heavenly creation. In the *Testament of Levi*, probably written during the second century BCE, the holy of holies is the "uppermost heaven" where "dwells the Great Glory" – God Himself. "Great Glory" is a favourite term for God in *Merkavah* texts, as in *1 Enoch*. Characteristic of such revelational texts, Levi is given a guided tour of the heavenly realms by an angel who explains everything to him:

> Listen, therefore, concerning the heavens which have been shown to you. The lowest is dark for this reason: it sees all the injustices of humankind and contains fire, snow and ice, ready for the day determined by God's righteous judgment. In it are all the spirits of those dispatched to achieve the punishment of mankind.
>
> In the second are the armies arrayed for the Day of Judgment to work vengeance on the spirits of error and of *Beliar* (Satan). Above them are the Holy Ones.
>
> In the uppermost heaven of all dwells the Great Glory in the holy of holies superior to all holiness.... There with him are thrones and authorities; there praises to God are offered eternally. So when the Lord looks upon us we all tremble. Even the heavens and earth and the abysses tremble before the presence of His majesty. But the sons of men, being insensitive to these matters, keep sinning and provoking the anger of the Most High.
>
> *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs (Levi) 3:1–5, 8–10, OTP1 pp.788–89*

In the *Midrash*, the rabbinic interpretive literature, there is a debate over the relationship between the celestial or higher holy of holies, the dwelling of the Lord, and the holy of holies of the tabernacle and Temple. The discussion arises from a line in the biblical *Song of Songs:*

> "A palanquin" – this refers to the throne of glory – "King Solomon made for himself" – the king whose name is peace – "of the wood of Lebanon" – this refers to the celestial holy of holies, which is exactly opposite *(mekuvvan)* the lower holy of holies.
>
> *Midrash Rabbah, Song of Songs 3:23, JCL*

"Exactly opposite" means that it is a higher counterpart. Later, the same topic is again addressed:

> "A man should concentrate his mind on the holy of holies." Rabbi Ḥiyya the Great and Rabbi Simeon ben Halafta interpret this differently.

> Rabbi Ḥiyya the Great says: "It means, the celestial holy of holies."
> Rabbi Simeon ben Halafta says: "It means, the holy of holies here below."
> Phinehas said: "I will harmonize your two statements: it means, the celestial holy of holies which is directly opposite the holy of holies here below; and so it is written, 'The place *(makom),* O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in;'[1] as though to say, 'exactly opposite *(mekuvvan)* Thy dwelling place, namely, the Sanctuary above'."
>
> *Midrash Rabbah, Song of Songs 4:12, JCL*

In another *midrash,* the rabbis recount a legend in which God takes the patriarch Abraham by the hand and walks with him in the celestial holy of holies, "in all directions". This is an imaginative way of saying that the patriarch Abraham was taken to the higher realms within, where physical space does not exist:

> Rabbi Ukba said: "On the night of the ninth of (the month of) *Av,* our father Abraham entered the holy of holies. The Holy One, blessed be He, seized him by the hand, and walked with him in all directions."
>
> *Midrash Rabbah, Lamentations 1:20, JCL*

Among the heavenly realms, the holy of holies was understood to correspond to the seventh palace or mansion in the realm of the chariot *('olam ha-merkavah).* This is the realm that the Hekhalot mystics understood as the seat of God's throne *('olam ha-briah,* realm of creation), and which is below the purely spiritual realm of *aẓilut* (*lit.* emanation). Other writers, such as the ninth-century bishop, Moses bar Kepha, understood the holy of holies in a similarly mystic manner:

> The entrance to the holy of holies
> signifies the entering into the Tree of Life,
> from which Adam was prohibited.
>
> *Moses bar Kepha, Mysteries of Baptism 24, MBM p.357*

The term was also used in early Christian texts with an explicitly mystical meaning. In the early Christian *Chaldaean Breviary,* for instance:

> In the holy of holies, which cannot be described,
> the Son of the King has built for his bride
> a glorified bride chamber.
>
> *Chaldaean Breviary, BCB 3:425; cf. MEM p.116*

Here, the "Son of the King" is the spiritual form of the Saviour, the bride is the soul, and the "glorified bride chamber" is a common metaphor for the inner sanctuary where the ascending soul meets the light form of the Saviour. Just as the outward holy of holies was reserved only for the sanctified priests, it is clear that only the inwardly pure can enter the inner holy of holies.

Medieval Jewish Kabbalists, in the *Zohar,* understood the holy of holies as existing within the highest spiritual realm of *aẓilut* (*lit.* emanation). They viewed the holy of holies as corresponding to the *sefirah* (emanation) of *Binah* (Understanding), which they called the 'womb' where *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom, the creative Power) first 'planted' the divine creative Will.

The construction of the original tabernacle, built by Moses to house the Ark according to God's specific design, is described in *Exodus.*[2] Likewise, the construction of the first Temple, built by Solomon, is described in *1 Kings,* together with design details of the holy of holies.[3] Parts of these descriptions have also been interpreted by Jewish commentators as symbolic of the inner creation.

See also: **holy mount, Kadosh**.

1. *Exodus* 15:17.
2. *Exodus* 25:1–27:21.
3. *1 Kings* 6:1–38.

house of God, house of the Lord (He. *bet El, bet Yahweh*) A common biblical expression for the divine eternity, as in the twenty-third psalm:

> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
> all the days of my life.
> And I will dwell
> in the house of the Lord *(bet Yahweh)* for ever.
>
> *Psalm 23:6, KJV*

The Hebrew term *bayit* (house) is also used to convey the same meaning:

> But as for me, I will come into Thy house *(bayit)*
> in the multitude of Thy love;
> And in the fear (awe) of Thee
> will I worship toward Thy holy temple.
>
> *Psalm 5:8, KB*

The term *ohel* (tent, tabernacle) is used in a similar manner, an image derived from the semi-nomadic life of the Israelites in biblical times. As an

idiom, the tent of the clan leader also signified the protection he extended to all who visited him. The expression is found in the *Psalms:*

> *Yahweh*, who has the right to enter Your tent *(ohel)*,
> or to live on Your holy mountain?
>
> *Psalm 15:1, JB*

house of Life, house of perfection, house of refuge Mandaean terms for the eternal realm or kingdom of God, as in a text where the Saviour describes his followers:

> Filled with light were his eyes
> on beholding the Great One in the house of perfection.
>
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 90, CPM p.94*

In another, the soul says of the Saviour:

> He discoursed with me in his pure Voice,
> just as *'uthras* (spirits) discourse in the house of refuge.
>
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 165; cf. CPM p.144*

"Life" was a common Mandaean term for God, and terms such as "Fragrance of Life" and "Water of Life" were frequently used for the creative Power that comes from the Divine, and by which the soul may return to Him. Thus, another Mandaean text reads:

> The Fragrance of Life rises to the house of Life,
> and we too will rise up to the house of Life:
> We shall be with the victorious.
> It is our support, and our confidence is in Life
> in the place of light and in the everlasting abode.
>
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 31; cf. CPM p.28*

And:

> Water of Life are you!
> You have come from the place that is life-giving,
> and are poured forth from the house of Life.
>
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 33; cf. CPM p.33*

ḥubb (A/P) *Lit.* love; used for God by the thirteenth-century Persian Sufi, 'Irāqī.

See **ḥubb** (▸2).

Huwa (A), **Hū** (P), **Hu** (He) *Lit.* He; a masculine pronoun; thus, the absolute, unmanifested Essence, the Supreme Being, God; the one real Being, in His hidden nature, beyond the arena of the divine Names and Attributes:

> Regard your power, for this power is from Him:
> know that your power is the gift of Him who is *Hū.*
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:473, MJR2 p.28*

Huwa appears in the statement of Muslim belief: *"Allāhu lā ilāha illā Huwa"* – "God, there is no god but He." This sentence, repeated so often in the *Qur'ān,* forms the basis of the *shahādah,* the fundamental profession of faith for the Muslim:

> And your God is one God:
> There is no god but He *(Huwa),*
> Most Gracious, Most Merciful.
> *Qur'ān 2:163, AYA*

> *Allāh!* There is no god but He *(Huwa)* –
> the Living, the Self-Subsisting, Supporter of all.
> *Qur'ān 2:255, HQSA*

The shorter variant, "*Lā ilāha illā Huwa* (There is no god but He)," is used as a *dhikr* (repetition practice) by some Sufis, and the terms *Hū* and *Huwa* commonly appear in Sufi literature. Sulṭān Bāhū, for instance, uses *Hū* in almost every couplet:

> *Hū* is within, *Hū* is without:
> *Hū* reverberates continually in my heart.
> *Sulṭān Bāhū, Bait 9, SBU p.319; cf. SBE (8) pp.232–33*

Hū and *Huwa* are also used as terms for the creative Power. *Hu* also means 'He' in Hebrew, and God is often called *"Hu"* in Jewish prayers.

See also: **Huwa** (3.1).

I am that I am, **I will be what I will be** (He. *ehyeh asher ehyeh*) The Hebrew can be rendered in either way. The name of God revealed to Moses, according to the *Exodus* story of the burning bush:

> And Moses said to God, "Behold, when I come to the people of Israel, and shall say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me

> to you,' and they shall say to me, 'What is His name,' what shall I say to them?"
>
> And God said to Moses, "I am that I am." And He said, "Thus shall you say to the people of Israel: 'I am' has sent me to you."
>
> And God said moreover to Moses, "Thus shall you say to the people of Israel, 'The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you; this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial to all generations.'"
>
> *Exodus 3:13–15, JCL*

The meaning is similar to that of *YHWH (Yahweh)*, the timeless Lord whose name means 'was, is and will be', simultaneously. It conveys the idea that God exists eternally, without beginning or end.

See also: **Yahweh**.

ichchhā Pūrak (Pu) *Lit.* Fulfiller *(Pūrak)* of desires *(ichchhā);* Fulfiller of aspirations; an epithet of God. All lesser desires arise from a misdirection of the soul's only true and innate desire – that of reunion with God. God is thus said to be the fulfiller of desires in the sense that when the soul attains union with Him, the essence and root of all other desires is fulfilled. Alternatively, since all things lie within the orbit of God's will, He is ultimately the fulfiller of all desires, and the giver of all joys, worldly or spiritual. Therefore, Guru Rāmdās suggests the worship of such a Lord in order to experience peace and happiness:

> The Lord is the fulfiller of aspirations *(ichchhā Pūrak)*,
> and the Giver of all the comforts;
> In His power is the Elysian cow *(Kāmadhenu)*.
> So, O my soul, meditate, on such Lord:
> then alone shalt thou obtain all the comforts *(sukh)*,
> O my soul (*man*, mind).
>
> *Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 669, MMS*

According to the *Purāṇas*, the *Kāmadhenu* is a mythical cow belonging to the deity *Indra*, able to fulfil all desires. Likewise, the "nine treasures" are a mythological wealth epitomizing all the riches of the world:

> Thou hast nine valuable riches and miracles and all the treasures.
> God, the Fulfiller of desires *(ichchhā Pūrak)*,
> saves the mortal (*jīa*, incarnate soul) in the end.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 376, MMS*

ilāh (A/P) *Lit.* a god, a deity; the deity; used in pre-Islamic Meccan religion for the supreme God, not necessarily in a purely monotheistic sense, but meaning God, the Creator, who is supreme over all other lesser gods:

And your God *(Ilāh)* is one God *(Ilāh):*
There is no god *(ilāha)* but He *(Huwa),*
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

Qur'ān 2:163, AYA

See also: **Allāh**.

'Illah al-Ūlá, al- (A), **'Illat-i Ūlá** (P) *Lit.* the First *(Ūlá)* Cause *('Illah);* the Superior Cause, the Highest Cause. Some Muslim philosophers have called God the First Cause. Others have made the distinction that the First Cause is the first emanation to come forth from the Essence of God. From the First Cause, the Universal Reason *('Aql al-Kull)* is brought into being. Universal Reason is therefore called the First Caused, since all other causes are secondary and proceed from it. Whatever the secondary causes may be, ultimately everything in the creation proceeds from the one First Cause.

Rūmī, however, intimates that conceiving God as the First Cause places limits on His power. It implies that there are other, secondary causes. His fiat is absolute, and no secondary cause has any power whatsoever. In the *Maśnavī,* God is presented as saying:

I am not the four temperaments or the First Cause *('Illat-i Ūlá),*
I remain forever in absolute control.
My action is uncaused and independent:
I have the power of predetermination,
I have no cause, O infirm one.

Rūmī, Maśnavī II:1625–26; cf. MJR2 p.305

It is a way of saying that God is beyond all human conception and thought.

See also: **al-Mubdi'**.

infinity Usually defined as endless space or time, infinity or the Infinite, in a mystic sense, refers to that which is prior to space and time in the creative process; hence, the state or condition of God. Understood mystically, space and time are the creations of the greater or universal mind, first coming into being at the highest point of the causal realm. Their first manifestation is as the fine or subtle essence of what becomes space and time as they are per-

ceived in the physical universe. In that high spiritual realm, space appears to stretch indefinitely, giving the illusion of infinity. Likewise, past, present and the future collapse into one, giving the illusion of eternity. True infinity and eternity, however, lie beyond space and time altogether. It is the differentiation of the divine oneness caused by the mind that results in the illusion of space and time.

See also: **Ayn-Sof**, **eternity**.

Īshvar(a) (S/H/Pu), **Īshar**, **Īsar** (Pu) *Lit.* he who chooses to rule; a name for God and other deities as the supreme Ruler, Controller, King and Lord; one who has the ability to do anything without the help of other beings, who is free to choose how to rule and free to do as He wishes; from the Sanskrit verb *īsh* (to rule, to govern, to command) and *var* (to choose).

Īshvara is a general term used for the Supreme Being, for other deities such as *Shiva,* or for the ruler of any inner region, especially within the realms of the mind. Saints like Tulsīdās have used *Īshvar* for the supreme Lord. The name is also used in the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā* for the absolute Reality or *Brahman:*

> Let us know Him as God *(Deva),* the adorable,
> who is the supreme Lord *(Īshvara)* among lords,
> the highest Deity among deities,
> the supreme Ruler among rulers –
> Who is … the transcendent Lord of the universse.
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 6:7*

And:

> O Arjuna! The Lord *(Īshvara)*
> dwells in the hearts of all beings,
> revolving them all by the mystery of *māyā,*
> as if turning on a wheel.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 18:61*

In *yoga* and *Advaita Vedānta, Īshvara* is regarded as the personalized aspect of *saguṇa Brahman* (*Brahman* with attributes). This may be Kṛishṇa, *Rāma* or some other divinity who is accessible to human imagination. It is not possible for ordinary human beings to worship God as an abstract concept. But as a 'personal' god, *Īshvara* is invested – in the mind of the devotee – with a form that can be related to. This does not deny the fact that the devotee may realize that his *Īshvara* is only one of the many attributes or manifestations of the Supreme, and is not the absolute Supreme Himself.

The human mind cannot grasp the absolute Reality; it can only infer its existence. It therefore tends to worship its projected image, *Īshvara*, the ruler of all appearances. Since *Īshvara* is understood to be a personalization of *Brahman*, Vedantists do not consider *Īshvara* to be the absolute Reality. *Brahman* associated with *māyā* is known as *Īshvara*, although Shankara has pointed out that *Brahman* only appears as *Īshvara* when viewed from the ignorance of *māyā*. The difference between *Īshvara* and an ordinary human being is that *Īshvara*, though associated with *māyā*, is not bound or deceived by it, whereas human beings are its slaves.

According to the terminology of Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, *Īshvar* is the lord of the first heavenly region, while *Parmeshvar* is *Brahman*, the lord of the second region:

> The will of the Saint then no one can undo:
> even *Īshvar* and *Parmeshvar* are helpless.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 38:7.30, SBP p.344*

And:

> *Īshvar* and *Parmeshvar* are perplexed
> as to who my beloved *Rādhā Swāmī* is.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 3:1.27, SBP p.10*

See also: **saguṇa Brahman** (2.2).

Jagadīsha (S), **Jagdīsh**, **Jagdīs** (H/Pu) *Lit.* Lord *(Īsh, Īshvar)* of the universe *(jagat);* Lord of the world; an epithet of the supreme Lord:

> I now serve the Lord of the universe *(Jagdīs):*
> I have no other work to do.
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 798, MMS*

Jagdīsh is also used as an epithet of both *Vishṇu* and *Shiva*.

jalāl (A/P) *Lit.* majesty, implying both inexorable power and awesome wrath. The Islamic names of God are often classed under two categories: *jalāl*, those pertaining to God's majesty; and *jamāl*, those pertaining to His beauty, conveying such attributes as grace and lovingkindness. *Jamāl* pertains to mercy, *jalāl* to justice. *Jalāl* and *jamāl* are often called the 'two hands *(yadān)* of God'. Sometimes they are also called the 'two fingers of God', and the mystic is said to be held between the 'two fingers of God'.

According to some Sufis, *jamāl* consists of *al-Nūr al-Muḥammadīyah* (the Light of Muḥammad, the celestial Light) and *al-Ism al-A'ẓam* (the Greatest Name). *Jalāl* or 'wrathful splendour' consists of *Shayṭān* (Satan) and *al-Ism al-Muẓill* (the Dark Name). However, these two forces, considered polar opposites in so many religious traditions, as 'God' and 'God's enemy', are regarded by Sufism as two manifestations or expressions of one God. Hence, some Sufis speak of *jalāl* as Divinity veiled *(martabat al-khafā')* and of *jamāl* as Divinity revealed or manifested. Other Sufis differentiate between the two in terms of the soul's experience of the Divine:

> The Apostle said: "None of you shall be saved by his works." Hence, in reality, without any controversy among Muslims, faith is *gnosis* and acknowledgement and acceptance of works. Whoever knows God, knows Him by one of His attributes, and the most elect of His attributes are of three kinds: those connected with His beauty *(jamāl)* and His majesty *(jalāl)* and with His perfection *(kamāl)*.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XVII, KM pp.287–88*

And:

> *Uns* (intimacy) and *haybat* (awe) are two states of the dervishes who travel on the way to God. When God manifests His glory to a man's heart so that His majesty *(jalāl)* predominates, he feels awe *(haybat)*; but when God's beauty *(jamāl)* predominates he feels intimacy *(uns)*. Those who feel awe *(haybat)* are distressed, while those who feel intimacy *(uns)* are rejoiced. There is a difference between one who is burned by His majesty *(jalāl)* in the fire of love and one who is illuminated by His beauty *(jamāl)* in the light of contemplation.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al Maḥjūb XXIV, KM p.376*

Rūmī explains that the soul must pass beyond the making of distinctions between *jamāl* and *jalāl*:

> Until you pass beyond the difference of poison and sugar,
> how will you catch a scent of unity and oneness?
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:498, MJR2 p.30*

He also says:

> He is asleep, day and night, to the affairs of the world,
> like a pen controlled by the hand of God.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:393; cf. MJR2 p.24*

"Like a pen controlled by the hand of God" refers to a traditional saying *(ḥadīth):* "The true believer's heart is between two fingers of the merciful God *(qalb al-mu'mini bayna iṣba'ayni min aṣābi'i al-Raḥmān)*" – the "two fingers" being the divine attributes of majesty *(jalāl)* and beauty *(jamāl)*. As God reveals Himself in one or the other of these aspects, the mystic's heart contracts with longing *(qabḍ)* or expands with joy *(basṭ)*.[1]

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná, al-asmā' al-jalāl, jamāl**.

1. See R.A. Nicholson, *MJR7* p.40; *cf.* Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* XXIV, *KM* p.374.

jamāl (A/P) *Lit.* beauty; divine beauty, absolute beauty, contrasted with *ḥusn*, the beauty of transitory things. The many Islamic names and attributes of God are classified in two major categories: those pertaining to His beauty *(jamāl)* and those pertaining to His awesome majesty and power *(jalāl)*. *Jamāl* and *jalāl* are called the two hands or the two fingers of God.

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná, jalāl**.

Jāmi', al- (A/P) the Gatherer; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh*, used in generic form in the *Qur'ān:*

> Our Lord! Thou art He that will gather *(Jāmi')* mankind together
> against a Day about which there is no doubt;
> For *Allāh* never fails in His promise.
>
> *Qur'ān 3:9, AYA*

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná, Yawm al-Dīn** (▸2).

Jerusalem (He. *Yerushalayim*) The modern capital of Israel, considered sacred by Jews, Christians and Muslims owing to its long history of association with the development and growth of these religions; captured by King David from the Jebusites about 1000 BCE; destroyed by the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, in 586 BCE; brought under Roman rule in 63 BCE, and devastated by them in the successive Jewish rebellions of 70 CE and 135 CE; taken by the Arabs in 637, and by the Seljuk Turks in 1071; ruled by the Crusaders from 1099 to 1187, then by the Egyptians and Turks until conquered by the British in 1917; the centre of the British administration of Palestine from 1922 to 1948; declared capital of the independent state of Israel upon termination of the British Mandate in 1948, a proclamation fiercely opposed by neighbouring Arab states, resulting in the 1948–49 War

of Independence; divided at the end of the war between the Arabs (the old city) and the Jews (the new city); unified under Israeli rule after the Six Days War in 1967, though remaining a source of much contention; claimed by the Palestinians as their capital.

The derivation of the name is uncertain, and a number of meanings have been suggested, including 'Abode of Peace', 'City of Peace' and 'Heritage of Peace', all derived from *shalom* (peace). However, the derivation of the name may be more mundane. The site of the city of Jerusalem is in the Judaean hills where the ancient Jebusites, a Canaanite people, worshipped the solar deities *Shaḥar* (the god of the rising sun) and *Shalim* (the god of the setting sun). Under the leadership of King David, the early Israelites of the ninth century BCE conquered Jebus, the Jebusites' city and holy place. Scholars believe that the Israelites may have grafted their word *shalom* on to the name of the Canaanite god of the evening *Shalim,* and added it to the original name *Jebus* (pronounced more softly as *Jerus*), to make the complete new name 'Jerusalem'.

Philo Judaeus, the first-century Greek-speaking Jew of Alexandria, interprets Jerusalem to mean "Vision of Peace". He also sees a mystical meaning in the name:

> The city of God is called in the Hebrew, Jerusalem, and its name when translated is 'Vision of Peace'. Therefore, do not seek for the city of the Existent among the regions of the earth; for it is not wrought of wood or stone, but in a soul in which there is no warring, whose sight is keen, which has set before it as its aim to live in contemplation and peace.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, On Dreams II:38, PCW5 pp.554–55*

Whatever its derivation, the city of Jerusalem became the focus of worship for the ancient Israelites. Symbolically it became a name for the heavenly realms or for the eternity of God, where all is peace and harmony. The soul yearns for this peace, just as Jews and Christians long to return to or visit the physical city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is sacred to Christians because of its association with Jesus and is the place of his crucifixion. It is sacred in Islam because of the revelational Night Journey *(al-Miʿrāj)* of Muḥammad symbolized as a journey from Mecca to Jerusalem. Biblical writers use variants such as the city of God, holy city, Mount Zion, and holy mount to refer more specifically to the mystical meaning. Later Christian mystics also wrote of a heavenly Jerusalem or a New Jerusalem. Jewish mystics also spoke of a Jerusalem 'above' *(Yerushalayim shel maʿalah)* and a Jerusalem 'below' *(Yerushalayim shel matah).*

See also: **city of God**.

Kabīr, al- (A/P/U/Pu) *Lit.* great, big, large, sizeable, bulky, voluminous; vast, immense; grand, magnificent *(kabīr);* a name of God: the Great, the Great One, the Most Great; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh:*

> That is because *Allāh* – He is the Truth;
> And what they call upon apart from Him is falsehood;
> And surely God is the Most High, the Most Great *(al-Kabīr).*
>
> *Qur'ān 22:62*

Explaining the essential meaning of the name, al-Jerrahi writes:

> He is the greatest whose greatness stretches from before the beginning until after the end.... All this which cannot fit into our comprehension was created with a single Word and with His will. If He so wills, He could do it again and again, and more and more, without losing any of His strength. There is no difference for Him between the creation of an atom and the infinite-seeming universe. This is His grandeur as much as we can understand it. He is greater than that.
>
> *Shaykh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti, The Most Beautiful Names, MBN pp.48–49*

Passing into the Hindi and Punjabi languages following the Muslim invasions of India, Indian mystics have also used the term. Guru Nānak uses *kabīr* as an adjective:

> I utter one supplication before Thee, hear it Thou, O my Creator:
> Thou art the true, great *(kabīr),* merciful and faultless Cherisher.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 721, MMS*

The fifteenth-century mystic, Kabīr, has used the term in a wordplay on his own name:

> I have done nothing, I could do nothing,
> and nothing is my body capable of doing.
> Whatever has happened has been done by my Lord
> that is how I became *Kabīr* (the Great One).
>
> *Kabīr, Sākhī Sangrah, Samarth 4, KSS p.103*

And:

> Kabīr, my mind has become immaculate like the Ganges's water:
> the Lord follows me, saying "Kabīr, O my Kabīr".
>
> *Kabīr, Ādi Granth 1367, MMS*

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

Kadosh, Kodesh (He) *Lit.* holy, holiness; biblical terms implying consecrated, set apart, transcendent, sanctified, hallowed, sacred. The terms are applied to God, His Holy Name *(Shem Kodsho),* which embodies His divine power or essence, to certain places and items associated with His worship, and ultimately to those who serve and follow Him. The feminine form of the term, *kedushah,* was adopted in the post-biblical, rabbinic period. The most common name of God in later rabbinic Judaism is *ha-Kadosh baruḥ-Hu* (the Holy One, blessed is He), or simply *Kadosh* (holy, the Holy One) or *Kadosh Yisra'el* (the Holy One of Israel).

In biblical Hebrew, *kadosh* and *kodesh* are related to ancient Babylonian and Ugaritic terms for the priests and priestesses consecrated to the service of various cults. Other related Ugaritic terms include *mikdash* (sanctuary) and *kodesh* (holiness), together with *ben kadosh* and *ba'al kadosh* (generic terms for deities). There was also a Syrian goddess, *Kudshu,* whose cult had been imported to Egypt, and which may have been known to the early Israelites from their period of Egyptian enslavement.

In the ancient Near Eastern religious milieu from which biblical Judaism was born, holiness was an inherent quality of certain people, objects, rites and places, the potent efficacy of this holiness being too powerful for ordinary mortals to handle. This trend is evident in the Bible when God's holiness is extended to the objects and people associated with Him, as in "His holy place *(makom kodsho)*",[1] "holy ground *(admat kodesh)*",[2] "assembly of the holy ones *(kehal kedoshim)*",[3] "holy nation *(goi kadosh)*",[4] and "my Holy Name *(Shem Kodshi),* which they hallow *(mekadshim)* to me".[5]

Scholars believe, however, that there are certain differences in the way the concept of holiness was used in the Bible. In the ancient Near East, holiness was not applied to the deity itself, but rather to anything or anyone associated with the religious cult, such as priests or priestesses. In the Bible, on the other hand, holiness is intrinsic to God, and the holiness of people or places is understood to be derived from their association with Him.

The power and awesomeness associated with the divine holiness is evident when God reveals himself to Moses in the burning bush that is not consumed. The place where He does so is holy, and God tells Moses to keep his distance, and remove his shoes in respect. Understood mystically, the story is symbolic of the soul's inner experience of the Divine. The "holy ground" symbolizes His holiness, and Moses' removal of his shoes represents the sense of awe felt by the soul in the divine presence. The Persian Sufi Hujwīrī also suggests that it indicates the journey's end, for once in the divine presence, the soul no longer needs the means of travel:[6]

> And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said, "Moses, Moses." And he said, "Here am I."

> And he said, "Do not come any closer; take off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground *(admat kodesh).*"
>
> *Exodus 3:4–5, JCL*

Even the people of Israel could become holy if they obeyed God's teachings. In *Exodus,* the idea of a "holy nation" runs in parallel with the "kingdom of priests". Just as the priests are consecrated, or dedicated to God, so too would the children of Israel become holy if they dedicated themselves to Him. Interpreted mystically, the holy nation consists of those who dedicate themselves to the true worship of God, who keep His "Covenant":

> Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my Covenant, then you shall be my own treasure among all peoples; for all the earth is mine. And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation *(goi kadosh).* These are the words which you shall speak to the people of Israel.
>
> *Exodus 19:5–6, JCL*

In fact, divine holiness is even more accessible: Isaiah indicates that God dwells not only in the "high and holy place", but also in the hearts of the humble:

> For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity,
> whose name is Holy *(Kadosh);*
> I dwell on the high and holy place *(makom kadosh),*
> yet with him also who is of a contrite and humble spirit,
> to revive the spirit of the humble,
> and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.
>
> *Isaiah 57:15, JCL*

Mystically, *kadosh* conveys the sense of God's transcendence – this is what is meant by His being awesome and unapproachable. By contrast, the term *kavod* (glory) is used to represent the immanence of the Divine, His presence continuously manifesting itself in creation, and through which He can be known. These qualities of transcendence and immanence have been understood by Jewish sages as the message of the prophet Isaiah when he describes the angels singing praises to God:

> In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the *serafim;* each one had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he did fly. And

> one cried to another, and said: "Holy *(kadosh)*, holy *(kadosh)*, holy *(kadosh)* is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory *(kavod)*."
>
> *Isaiah 6:1–3, JCL*

This passage was incorporated by the rabbis of antiquity into the Jewish daily prayers, and is recited several times each day. It is regarded as one of the most important declarations of faith in God and embodies how the Jewish worshipper understands God – as both transcendent and immanent, remote yet approachable, unknowable yet always revealing Himself.

See also: **har ha-kodesh**, **holy mount**, **holy of holies**.

1. *Psalm* 24:3.
2. *Exodus* 3:5.
3. *Psalm* 89:6.
4. *Exodus* 19:6.
5. *Leviticus* 22:2.
6. Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* XXIV, *KM* p.372.

Kalyptos (Gk) *Lit.* hidden, veiled; the hidden or veiled One, the hidden or veiled *aeon* or realm; the highest region of the Godhead; eternity; used for the supreme Source of all in *Allogenēs* and *Zostrianos,* two of the Coptic, Nag Hammadi gnostic texts dating from early Christian times. The distinction is also made between that which "really exists" and the illusion and impermanence of the creation. Only *Kalyptos,* in His fourfold aspect, "really exists"; all else is subject to change and dissolution. Unfortunately, the manuscript of *Zostrianos,* which contains the best illustrations of this term, is very poorly preserved, leaving many words illegible or missing. In the gnostic context, an *aeon* is a power, a region or a world:

> *Kalyptos* is a single *aeon:*
> He has four different *aeons*....
> All of them exist in One, dwelling together, ...
> and filled with the *aeon* that really exists....
>
> The first of the *aeons* is *Harmedon,* the Father-Glory....
> The second Light is one in which He is unknowable....
> The third Light is ...
> The fourth Light is ... a teaching and glory ...
> and the Truth of the four *aeons*....

The *aeons* that really exist do so in Silence.
The (supreme) Existence was (is) inactivity,
and knowledge of the self-established *Kalyptos*
was (is) ineffable....

Together with the *aeon* in the *aeons*,
He has a fourfold difference with all the rest who are there.
But *Kalyptos* really exists.

Zostrianos 115–16, 120, 124–25; cf. NHS31 pp.198–201, 206–7, 212–15

The four divisions of the Godhead are referred to in a number of other gnostic writings of the same period – notably those attributed to a group designated by scholars as the Sethians, in particular *Marsanēs*, the *Gospel of the Egyptians, A Valentinian Exposition* and the *Pistis Sophia*. However, the references are either vague, have obviously presented difficulties in translation resulting in considerable obscurity, or the manuscripts are in such poor condition that many words are illegible.

Some gnostic texts, for instance, talk of the Silent One as the Triple-Powered One, referring to the three higher aspects of a fourfold Godhead. Similarly, the *Gospel of the Egyptians* refers to the supreme Power as "the Four Lights":

The great Seth (their Saviour) was sent by the Four Lights.

Gospel of the Egyptians 62, NHS4 p.142

Descriptions of divisions in or aspects of the Godhead are not uncommon in mystic literature.

See also: **Ābā' al-'Ulwīyah**, **Anāmī**, **Keter**.

karam Bidhātā (Pu) *Lit.* Ruler *(Bidhātā)* of destiny *(karam), karam* being the Punjabi equivalent of *karma;* the Apportioner of *karma*, the Architect of destiny, the Master of destiny; He who apportions the fruit of *karma;* an epithet of the supreme Lord:

Thou art at all the places, wherever I go, O my true Creator:
Thou art the Giver of all,
the Architect of destiny *(karam Bidhātā)*,
and the distress Dispeller.

Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 438, MMS

See also: **karma** (6.3).

Karaṇ kāraṇ (Pu) *Lit.* Doer *(Karaṇ)* of causes *(kāraṇ);* hence, the Instrument of Causes, the Cause of causes; the Impulse, the Act or the Cause behind all lesser causes; the First Cause; an epithet of God portraying Him as the sole Originator and Sustainer of all that exists.

Karaṇ, from *karanā* (to act, to do, to perform), is an instrument or means of action, that by which something is done or accomplished. It is the essential Means, that by which the universe has come into being – with its subsequent multiplicity of causes *(kāraṇ)* and effects. The expression appears frequently in the *Ādi Granth,* along with the variants *Karaṇhār(ā), Karaṇehār(ā)* and *karaṇ Krāvaṇhār.* Guru Arjun says that the Creator is the prime cause behind all aspects of the creation:

> O my mind, have thou the support of the Lord's Name;
> Realize thou Him, who didst create thee:
> the one Lord is the Cause of causes *(Karaṇ kāraṇ).*
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1007, MMS*

See also: **Kartā**.

Karīm, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Generous; the All-Generous; also, the supreme in honour, glory and generosity; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh;* derived from *karām* (noble nature, magnanimity), *karīm* means generous, beneficent, kind, gracious. In an involved story concerning Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, Solomon asks that the throne of Sheba be brought to him, to which one man replies:

> "I will bring it to you within
> the twinkling of an eye!"
> Then when (Solomon) saw it
> placed firmly before him, he said:
> "This is by the grace of my Lord! –
> to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful!
> And if any is grateful,
> truly his gratitude is (a gain) for his own soul;
> But if any is ungrateful,
> truly my Lord is free of all needs,
> supreme in honour *(al-Karīm)!*"
>
> *Qur'ān 27:40; cf. AYA*

The last line may also be translated as "All-Generous *(al-Karīm)*".

The miracles of grace that happen through Saints are called *karāmāt,* gifts or favours from God, the All-Generous.

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

Kartā (S/H/Pu), **Kartār** (Pu) *Lit.* doer; actor, maker, author, creator, agent; a name of God, since everything happens by the divine will, and He is the Author, Doer and Creator of everything; also in terms such as *Kartā Purush, Kartā Purakh* (Creator-Being or Lord) and *Kartā kā Kartā* (Creator of the Creator):

Millions of ages have passed
and I have always been the Doer *(Karaṇehār)*.
I have been the Doer *(Karaṇehār)*
and the Creator of the Creator *(Kartā kā Kartā)*.
The one called the Creator *(Kartā)* is none other than myself.

Brahmā, Vishṇu, Mahesh and their consorts all pass away,
but I live on for ever and ever.
Earth, fire and water, they too pass,
so too do air and ether.
Even all-alluring *māyā* passes,
and passes too her primeval flame.

I am the Ever Living One, O Paltū!
The wise alone will comprehend.
Millions of ages have passed,
and I have always been the Doer *(Karaṇehār)*.

Paltū, Bānī 1, Kuṇḍalī 177, PSB1 pp.74–75

The term is often used in the *Ādi Granth*:

Whatever work the Creator *(Kartā)* does
seems not unpleasant to my mind.
By the grace of the congregation of the righteous *(sādhsangat)*
and the Saints, my sleeping soul has awakened.

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 215, MMS

My honourable God, Thou art the Maker *(Kartā)* and Creator *(Kartār)*:
Save me as it pleases Thee, O God,
and grant me the life of meditation.

Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 54, MMS

The term is also used as an epithet for *Brahmā, Vishṇu* and *Shiva*.

See also: **Karaṇ kāraṇ**.

Karuṇāmaya (S/H) *Lit.* made of *(maya)* compassion *(karuṇā);* full of or abounding in compassion. *Karuṇā* means pity, compassion, mercy, tenderness of feeling; *maya* means made of, consisting of. *Karuṇāmaya* thus denotes full of mercy, full of compassion, full of tender feelings; hence, the Compassionate One. The term is used as an epithet of God. As Kabīr writes:

> O Compassionate One *(Karuṇāmaya):*
> many paths I wandered, in quest of You;
> Now through Your Name all my obstacles
> and all my impurities have been dispelled,
> and I have attained a state of supreme bliss.
>
> *Kabīr, Granthāvalī, Pad 267, KG p.134*

It is also said in *Anurāg Sāgar,* a book that is a part of the tradition associated with Kabīr, that Kabīr was known as *Karuṇāmaya* when he came to this world in the *dvāpar yuga:*

> I proceeded to the mortal world,
> and imparted the teachings of *sat Shabd* (true Word).
> Thus, when I came to the world in the *dvāpar yuga,*
> I was called by the name of *Karuṇāmaya.*
>
> *Anurāg Sāgar, ASLV p.81*

Whether or not this previous incarnation of Kabīr is a historical fact is impossible to determine. According to traditional Hindu calculations, *dvāpar yuga* ended several hundred thousand years ago, while Sanskrit is only a few thousand years old. So presumably, Kabīr was known as the Compassionate One in *dvāpar yuga.* Or perhaps it simply means that mystics of the highest order – who are always an ocean of mercy and compassion – have always been in the world.

See also: **Dayāl**.

kavod (He) *Lit.* glory, majesty; the awe-inspiring and brilliant manifestation of the divine presence, the all-encompassing and immanent light of God, often associated with fire and brightness, as described by the biblical prophets.

Etymologically, *kavod* has been connected with the adjective *kaved,* meaning 'heavy', suggesting a "materialization of the divine Essence – a 'condensation into a cloud'".[1] According to the *Exodus* story, the glory *(kavod)* of God surrounds Mount Sinai like a cloud before God calls Moses to receive his instructions.

> And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory *(kavod)* of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and the seventh day, He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory *(kavod)* of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the people of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount; and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.
>
> *Exodus 24:15–18, JCL*

Later in *Exodus,* God again reveals Himself, this time in the pillar of cloud that leads them in the desert. According to the story, God speaks with Moses "as a man speaks to a friend".[2] Moses then asks for a sign of God's grace, something to demonstrate that what God has told him is true. God says that He will send His presence to be with him. Moses continues by asking to see God's "glory *(kavod)*":

> And He said, "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest."
>
> And he (Moses) said to Him, "If Your presence does not go with me, carry us not from here." …
>
> And the Lord said to Moses, "I will do this thing also that you have spoken; for you have found grace in my sight, and I know you by name."
>
> And he (Moses) said, "I beg You, show me Your glory *(kavod).*" …
>
> And He said, "You cannot see my face; for no man shall see me and live."
>
> *Exodus 33:14–15, 17–18, 20, JCL*

God, however, does arrange for Moses to have a glimpse of Him. He instructs Moses:

> *Yahweh* said: "Here is a place next to me;
> Station yourself on the rock, and it shall be:
> when my glory *(kavod)* passes by,
> I will place you in the cleft of the rock,
> and screen you with my hand until I have passed by.
> Then I will remove my hand;
> You shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."
>
> *Exodus 33:21–23, FBM*

The narrative then explains how Moses meets God on Mount Sinai, remaining with Him for forty days and nights without eating or drinking, receiving "the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments". When he finally de-

scended from the mountain, the "skin of his face shone" so much that he had to wear a veil when talking to the Israelites.[3]

Kavod is also used by Ezekiel and Isaiah to refer to the transcendence of God's appearance:

> And, behold, the glory *(kavod)* of the God of Israel
> came from the way of the east;
> And his Voice was like the sound of many waters,
> and the earth shone with his glory *(kavod)*.
> And the glory *(kavod)* of the Lord came into the house
> by the way of the gate which faced towards the east.
> And a spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court,
> and, behold, the glory *(kavod)* of the Lord filled the house.
>
> *Ezekiel 43:2, 4–5, JCL*

And:

> Arise, shine; for your light has come,
> and the glory *(kavod)* of the Lord has risen upon you.
> For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,
> and thick darkness, the people;
> But the Lord shall arise upon you,
> and his glory *(kavod)* shall be seen upon you.
>
> *Isaiah 60:1, 2, JCL*

Some scholars have linked the biblical use of the term *kavod* with the Mesopotamian notion of God being surrounded by a nimbus or halo. "The terms denoting the halo of the gods in Mesopotamia, *pulhu-melammu,* actually correspond to the Hebrew *kavod-yir'ah* (glory-awe) and indeed refer to the flame and fire enveloping the Godhead."[4]

The term was also used by later Jewish mystics and sages, whose descriptions of the *kavod* became increasingly elaborate. The term *Shekhinah* (indwelling presence) was generally used from the rabbinic period (200 BCE – 400 CE) onwards for the same quality or aspect of the divine presence. The *Merkavah* mystics (100 BCE – 500 CE) identified the *kavod* as the divine Being seated on the throne in the inner heavens, as portrayed in the biblical visions of Ezekiel and other prophets.

Sa'adia Ga'on (*c.*882–942), sage and philosopher of tenth-century Baghdad, was disturbed that God, who is formless, is described in the Bible in human terms – speaking, sitting, using His hands, arms and so on. He therefore tried to resolve this paradox by teaching that the infinite and transcendent Creator produces an embodiment of His divine power – the *kavod* – as "a created light, the first of all creations".[5] Sa'adia identified this light with

the radiance of the *Shekhinah* and the *Ruaḥ ha-Kodesh* (Holy Spirit). According to him, it is from the *kavod* that the Voice and Word of God projects itself, and acts in the world.

Sa'adia taught that the amorphous spiritual light became embodied in the form of an angel who revealed God's holy presence to the biblical prophets. He also called the fantastic figure of immense proportions, described in the first-century gnostic work, the *Shi'ur Komah,* as "the *kavod* above the *kavod*", implying a series of such intermediaries or angels.

The twelfth- and thirteenth-century *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz* (the *Ḥasidim* of Germany), who were influenced by Sa'adia, believed that through the *kavod,* God actively creates a relationship with man. Not only did God visibly reveal himself at Mount Sinai through the *kavod,* but through meditative prayer people at any time could achieve union with the *kavod.*

Some of the German *Ḥasidim* identified the *kavod* with the *Shekhinah,* the *keruv* (cherub) and the *Gedulah* (greatness). The *Book of Life* (*c.* 1200 CE) defines the *kavod* as "the divine will, the Holy Spirit, the Word of God … inherent in all creatures".[6]

Judah the *Ḥasid,* one of the leading German *Ḥasidim,* in his *Book of the Glory* wrote of two levels of the *kavod* – inner and outer. The inner glory *(kavod penimi)* is "identical with the *Shekhinah* and the Holy Spirit, and as having no form, but a voice …".[7] Many of the *Ḥasidim* believed that a formless, 'inner' glory gives rise to a 'visible' glory, an embodiment of the divine power that sits on the heavenly throne in the visions of the prophets, which they sometimes called the 'special cherub'. The visible glory is also identified with the *Logos,* understood in this context as the manifestation of God's creative Power.

Some of the *Ḥasidim* taught that there are not only two *kavods,* but that the inner *kavod* is reflected in countless reflections until it finally becomes visible even to angels and holy *serafim.* Thus, the teaching arose of numerous *kavods,* similar in some ways to the ten *sefirot* (emanations) of the later Kabbalists. This symbolism is an attempt to describe the gradations of the divine will or light as it is projected from the Godhead, and manifested, or embodied, in the creation.

In the Kabbalah itself, the tenth and last *sefirah* (emanation) of *Malkut* (Kingship) is regarded as the gateway through which the divine Essence enters the world; this *sefirah* is often called the *kavod* or the *Shekhinah.* It is through this *sefirah* that God enters into contact with humanity. In some of the parables of the anonymous, twelfth-century *Sefer ha-Bahir (Book of Brilliance),* the glory *(kavod)* is portrayed as God's daughter or his wife, and as Wisdom. "God's glory", the unknown writer concludes, is "blessed":

> What is the meaning of "the whole earth is filled with His glory *(kavod)*"?

This is the earth that was created on the first day. It is on high, filled with God's glory *(kavod)* and paralleling the land of Israel.

And what is (this glory)? It is Wisdom, as it is written, "The wise shall inherit glory *(kavod)*."[8]

It is furthermore written, "Blessed is God's glory *(kavod)* from His place."[9]

Sefer ha-Bahir 130, in BAK p.48

See also: **hod**.

1. V.O. Goldberg, *Die Wirklichkeit der Hebraer,* pp.65, 104; in *HJM* p.19.
2. *Exodus* 33:11.
3. *Exodus* 34:28–35.
4. "*Kavod* of the Lord", in *Encyclopedia Judaica, EJCD.*
5. Sa'adia Ga'on, in *MTJM* p.375; see also *MTJM* pp.110–15 *passim.*
6. *The Book of Life,* in *MTJM* p.112.
7. *Book of the Glory,* in *MTJM* p.112.
8. *Proverbs* 3:35.
9. *Ezekiel* 3:12.

Keshav(a) (S/H), **Kesho**, **Keso** (H/Pu) *Lit.* having hair *(kesh);* one with hair, implying one with distinctive, long, beautiful, handsome, luxuriant and shining hair; an epithet of Kṛishṇa in the *Bhagavad Gītā* and *Mahābhārata,* Kṛishṇa being renowned in legend for his beautiful dark complexion and his long, shining black hair. From this usage, *Keshav* has become a Hindu name for God:

O *Keshav,* how can I describe the indescribable?
Seeing Your strange creation,
a man can only be baffled by it all.

Tulsīdās, Vinayapatrikā, Pad 111:1, VTD p.185

Likewise, referring to some of Kṛishṇa's legendary exploits as examples of the way God cares for His creation, Kanakdās writes:

O mind, hold yourself in peace, do not get perturbed:
doubt not that He tends all men with equal care.

Who watered the tree that has sprouted on the mountain peak?
Which gardener formed its bed to hold the water?
He it is that has created us,
and He it is that carries the burden of our care.
It is sure that He will tend us, doubt it not.

Who is it brings timely food to the beasts of the forest
and the birds of the air?
Like a mother who tends her offspring,
the Lord has taken the burden of our care upon Himself.
It is sure that He will save us, doubt it not.

Who feeds with his own hand the croaking frogs
that hide in the rock crevices?
Keshav knows our needs and tends us all, doubt it not.

Kanakdās, in ASOS pp.247–48

The derivation of *Keshava* is not entirely certain. Some interpreters say that it was given to Kṛishṇa after he had killed the demon Keshī, or that it means the 'rayed' or 'radiant one', Kṛishṇa being associated with light *(kesha).*

Since Kṛishṇa is regarded as an incarnation of *Vishṇu, Keshava* is also used as a name for *Vishṇu.*

See also: **Govinda**, **Goswāmī**, **Kṛishṇa** (4.2).

Keter (He) *Lit.* crown; the highest of the *sefirot* (divine emanations) in the Kabbalist system; also called *Ayin* (Nothing), since it is conceived to be beyond substance or any 'thing'. *Keter* corresponds to the formlessness of God. According to the *Zohar* and other Kabbalistic works, the level of *Keter* pre-exists the creation along with the *Ayn-Sof,* the Infinite, and is considered part of the Godhead. *Ayn-Sof* represents the concealed Godhead, and *Keter* represents the first hint of the subtle divine will revealing itself, and is called the 'will-less' will. To put it another way, while the *Ayn-Sof* is the aspect of the Godhead that is hidden and turns inward, *Keter* is that aspect which turns outward. It is the potential for immanence.

The third part of the Godhead is the second *sefirah* of *Ḥokhmah,* Wisdom, which is the first subtle expression of the divine will, the creative Power. Wisdom is also sometimes called *Yesh* (Something), as opposed to the *Ayin* (Nothing) of *Keter.* This expresses the mystical concept of something (the creation, *i.e.* form) coming from nothing (God, the formless).

According to the rabbis, each spiritual quality is mirrored in the successively lower realms of creation. Thus the divine quality or level of *Keter* or *Ayin* (nothing), when reflected in the individual human being, is humility, self-abnegation.

See also: **Ayin**, **Crown**, **sefirot** (4.1), **Yesh** (3.1).

Khāliq, al- (A/P/U), **Khālaq** (Pu) *Lit.* the Creator; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh*. *Al-Khāliq* has brought into being *al-khalq* (the creation, Pu. *khalaq*):

> He is *Allāh*, the Creator *(al-Khāliq)*,
> the Originator, the Fashioner.
> To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names *(al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná):*
> All that is in the heavens and on earth
> declares His praises and glory;
> And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.
>
> *Qur'ān 59:24; cf. AYA, MGK*

The term has also been used by some north Indian mystics:

> Farīd, the Creator *(Khālaq)* abides in creation *(khalaq)*,
> and the creation *(khalaq)* abides in Creator.
> Whom should we call bad,
> when there is none without Him?
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1381, MMS*

And:

> The Creator *(Khālaq)* is awake, but the soul is asleep:
> how, then, can union be achieved?
>
> *Dādū, Bānī 2, Shabd 41:1, DDB2 p.13*

See also: **Allāh**, **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

Khaṣm (A/P/U), **Khasm** (H), **Khasam** (Pu) *Lit.* husband, spouse, master; hence, beloved; also, in Punjabi, owner; an epithet of the Supreme Being, particularly in imagery representing the soul as the wife or bride and the Lord as the divine Husband or Beloved:

> She (the soul) has not relinquished pride of caste and creed,
> nor has she given up desire for worldly name and fame.
> Yet she desires to find the divine Beloved *(Khasam)!*
> Can the Beloved *(Khasam)* be found so easily?
>
> *Paltū, Bānī 1, Kuṇḍalī 263:3, PSB1 p.109*

> Those maids on whom the Lord casts His look of favour
> become happy wives.
> She who recognizes her Spouse *(Khasam)*
> places her body and soul (*man*, mind) before Him.
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 38, MMS*

Khudā (P/U) *Lit.* lord, master, ruler, owner; a Persian name for God implying that He is self-revealing, popularly explained as 'He who comes by Himself':

> Truth reveals itself. Therefore the Persian word for both God and truth is *Khudā,* which means self-revealing, thus uniting God with truth. One cannot explain either of these words. The only help the mystic can give is by indicating how to arrive at this revelation.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK10 pp.50–51*

The common Persian expression, *Khudā ḥāfiẓ,* means 'God keep you', 'adieu', 'goodbye (God be with ye)'.

See also: **al-Mālik**.

King (He. *Melekh*), **King of Glory** A king is a male sovereign, the official ruler of an independent state. Throughout the world's mystic literature, the term is used for God and sometimes for the Master, conveying the idea of divine majesty, power, beneficence and protection, as in the twenty-fourth psalm:

> Lift up your heads, O you gates:
> and be lifted up, you everlasting doors,
> and the King of Glory shall come in.
> Who is this King of Glory?
> The Lord strong and mighty,
> the Lord mighty in battle.
> Lift up your heads, O you gates,
> and lift them up, you everlasting doors,
> that the King of Glory may come in.
> Who is this King of Glory?
> The Lord of (the heavenly) Hosts,
> He is the King of Glory.
>
> *Psalm 24:7–10, KB*

This psalm was used as a basis for the ancient Jewish *merkavah* (chariot) or throne mysticism, which taught the contemplation of God as a king seated on His throne of glory, reached after the devotee had ascended through a hierarchy of heavenly realms. The "gates" probably refer to the gateways or passages, the narrowing of the concentrated attention, by which the soul passes from one inner heaven to another.

The majesty of God's royal grandeur is also conveyed clearly in the Jewish *Hekhalot* literature. There are also many parables told by the mystics in which God is portrayed as a king who sends his son into the world, or whose

daughter has left her home. In different ways, these all relate the same story: the soul leaves his or her princely home with the King (the Lord) and enters the creation. But through the King's unqualified love and forgiveness, the soul is eventually enabled to return home, attaining reunion with the Father, the Lord, the King. Examples are Jesus' parables of the wedding feast[1] and the prodigal son,[2] the gnostic poem, the *Robe of Glory*,[3] and the Hasidic story, told by Rabbi Naḥman of Bratslav, of the king's son who thinks he is a turkey.[4]

In the gnostic *Gospel of Philip*, the writer indicates the importance of the Saviour (the "Lamb") and alludes to Jesus' parable of the wedding feast, where a guest is turned away because he is not wearing a wedding garment – the soul's 'robe of glory' of innate spiritual light. No one can see God, the "King", says the writer, if he is not wearing this pure 'garment':

> Do not despise the Lamb for, without him, it is not possible to see the King. No one will be able to go in to the King if he is naked.
>
> *Gospel of Philip 58, NHS20 pp.156–57*

In another gnostic text, it is Christ who is referred to as the "King":

> Accept Christ, … who is able to set you free.… For this King whom you have is forever invincible, against whom no one will be able to fight nor say a word. This is your King and your Father, for there is no one like him. The divine Teacher is with you always. He is a Helper, and he meets you because of the good that is in you.
>
> *Teachings of Silvanus 96–97; cf. NHS30 pp.308–11*

Rulers of the various inner realms were also spoken of as 'kings' in some of the gnostic texts, as in the *Pistis Sophia*.

See also: **kingdom**, **al-Malik**, **al-Mālik**.

1. *Matthew* 22:2–14.
2. *Luke* 15:11–32.
3. *Acts of Thomas* XI.
4. Rabbi Naḥman of Bratslav, *Likkutei Moharam* 19, in *JMT* p.237.

kingdom, kingdom of God, kingdom of heaven The eternal realm, eternity, the highest region of pure spirit; terms used by Jesus, in Christianity, and by other Middle Eastern mystics for the realm where God is experienced. Many mystics have described this mystic kingdom as the true home of the soul. As one of the Manichaean hymns in Parthian has it:

O soul, raise your eyes to the Height, …
  lo, your Fathers are calling you.
Now go aboard the ships of light,
  and receive your garland of glory,
  and return to your kingdom.
Manichaean Psalm Book CCXLVI; cf. MPB p.55

Or as was said of the third-century Persian mystic, Mānī, after his death by execution:

When you had set your affairs in order,
  you implored your Father, and He answered you.
You left them (your persecutors) your body,
  and ascended to your kingdom.
Manichaean Psalm Book CCXLI; cf. MPB p.44

Mystics have said that this kingdom lies within man. Yet, when it is found within, it is also discovered everywhere in the creation, inside and outside. If an individual's consciousness is raised up to that level, then the kingdom of heaven is experienced as being everywhere, here and now. As a Manichaean psalmist writes:

The kingdom of the heavens –
  behold, it is within us,
  behold, it is outside us.
If we believe in it, we shall live in it forever.
Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.160

This is the meaning of Jesus' various sayings on the subject, as in Luke:

The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:
Neither shall they say, "Lo here! or, lo there!"
For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.
Luke 17:20–21, KJV

And in Matthew:

Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
Matthew 4:17, KJV

Though, for many centuries, "at hand" has been taken to mean that the end of the world was coming soon, and this was probably the understanding of the compilers of the synoptic gospels, the idea is a misunderstanding of

mystic teachings. These sayings of Jesus mean that the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God is both within and without – that all souls live within the ocean of God, and can never escape from it. It is "within you"; it is "at hand"; it is everywhere. This is said explicitly in the version of Jesus' saying found in the *Gospel of Thomas:*

> Jesus said,
> "If those who lead you say to you,
> 'See, the kingdom is in the sky',
> then the birds of the sky will precede you.
> If they say to you, 'It is in the sea',
> then the fish will precede you.
> Rather, the kingdom is inside of you,
> and it is outside of you.
>
> "When you come to know yourselves,
> then you will become known,
> and you will realize that it is you
> who are the sons of the Living Father.
> But if you will not know yourselves,
> you dwell in (spiritual) poverty,
> and it is you who are that poverty."
>
> *Gospel of Thomas 32–33:3, NHS20 pp.52–55*

Here, Jesus also adds that awareness of the kingdom comes about through *gnosis,* inner knowledge or experience of the nature of the true self. If a person does not have such mystic self-knowledge, then he lives in spiritual poverty and feels himself to be identified with that limited sense of self. That is, before the kingdom can be seen everywhere, it must first be seen within oneself. In another saying recorded in the same gospel, Jesus similarly says:

> His disciples said to him:
> "When will the kingdom come?"
>
> Jesus said,
> "It will not come by waiting for it.
> It will not be a matter of saying
> 'here it is' or 'there it is'.
> Rather, the kingdom of the Father
> is spread out upon the earth (is everywhere),
> and men do not see it."
>
> *Gospel of Thomas 51:113, NHS20 pp.92–93*

Primarily, however, the kingdom is within and is to be sought there. It "is not of this world". This is why – according to John's gospel – when challenged by Pilate, Jesus said:

> My kingdom is not of this world:
> if my kingdom were of this world,
> then would my servants fight,
> that I should not be delivered to the Jews:
> But now is my kingdom not from hence.
>
> *John 18:36, KJV*

Also emphasizing that this kingdom is essentially spiritual, rather than material, Paul says:

> Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,
> neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.
>
> *1 Corinthians 15:50, KJV*

Likewise one of the Manichaean psalms, though fragmentary, has the same thing to say. The kingdom is not material. It is an inner state of being or consciousness. It is also "love":

> The kingdom is love, this white dove.
> It is not gold and silver,
> it is not eating and drinking.
> For the kingdom of God is not in a multitude.
> Let her dwell in you and … before you.…
>
> Lo, this is a kingdom whose name is Kingdom.
> It is a joy … wherein there is no sorrow.
> It is a true rest, wherein there is no toil.
> May we inherit it for ever and ever.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.158*

And again:

> The kingdom is not in words.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.161*

In the Bible and other Hebrew sources, the term used for kingdom is *malkut.*

See also: **King, malkut**.

kodesh kodashim (He) *Lit.* holy *(kodesh)* of holies *(kodashim).*

See **holy of holies**.

Kurahy (G) The son of the divine Creator of the world; the prototype of the Guaraní shaman.

See **Nanderú Guazú**.

lā-makān (A/P) *Lit.* without *(lā)* location or place *(makān);* without a dwelling place; beyond space; no place; the spaceless realm; an expression used by Rūmī for eternity. In describing the creation below this level, some metaphor or analogy can be used, but the ultimate Reality is beyond all description and cannot even be termed a region or a place. It is beyond time and space:

> In the spaceless realm *(lā-makān)* of the light of God,
> the past, present and the future do not exist.
> Past and future are two things only in relation to you,
> in reality they are one.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī III:1151–52; cf. MJR4 p.65*

This realm is even beyond the "imagination of travellers" on the mystic way. Describing the perfect Saint, Rūmī writes:

> His form is on earth and his spirit in *lā-makān* (no-place),
> a *lā-makān* beyond the imagination of travellers
> (on the mystic way):
> Not such a *lā-makān* that it should come into your understanding,
> or that a fancy about it should be born in you every moment.
> Nay, *makān* (place) and *lā-makān* (no-place)
> are under his control,
> just as the four (paradisal) rivers are under the control
> of one who dwells in paradise.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1581–83; cf. MJR2 p.87*

See also: **lā-maqām**.

lā-maqām (A/P) *Lit.* without *(lā)* station, position, rank, place, occasion *(maqām);* hence, placeless, timeless; mystically, eternity.

See also: **lā-makān**.

land, land of rest, land of the Buddhas, land of the immortal, land of the Living Ones The true home or country of the soul, the eternal realm, eternity; 'land' on its own is normally qualified as 'the land', 'the pure land', 'my own land' or other similar expressions, as in the Manichaean psalm:

> My own land I have beheld,
> my Father I have found.
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCLIII; cf. MPB p.63*

Other variants are common in the Manichaean hymns. In the texts from Chinese Turkestan, the devotee prays to Jesus for deliverance from the wheel of birth and death, including the plea:

> Quickly guide me into the peace
> of the clean and pure land!
> *Manichaean Hymns, LSMH p.179:35*

In one of the Coptic psalms, it is said of the Saviour:

> He rolled up his wealth, he took it,
> he took it up to the land of rest.
> *Psalms of Thomas I, Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.205*

From the remainder of the psalm, it seems that "his wealth" refers to the chosen souls whom the Saviour takes back to God. In another psalm, the soul says that she has been taken to the "land of the immortal":

> Christ, my Bridegroom, has taken me to his bride chamber,
> I have rested with him in the land of the immortal.
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCLIII, MPB p.63*

In another, where the eternal realm is called the land of the Living Ones (the Masters), the psalmist begs for the healing of the divine Physician, adding:

> Your healing is of the land of the Living Ones.
> *Psalms of Thomas XIV, Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.221*

In other Manichaean texts, the eternal land of light is called the "land of the *Buddhas*", the *Buddhas* being the Masters. Addressing Mānī, one writer says that the souls of this world, "confused" by their "attachment" to material existence, were taken by their Saviour to eternity, through hearing his "Command" or "Word":

All living beings had been confused;
But when they heard this Command of yours,
their virtue flowed like streams and rivers,
and they were reborn in the land of the *Buddhas*.

Manichaean Hymns, TTT3 p.205:115, MTP pp.173–74, 187:228–29; cf. GSR p.284:1.115

To those who had been bound to the root of attachment,
you showed the road to the land of the *Buddhas*.

Manichaean Hymns, TTT3 p.202:30, MTP pp.169, 182:52–53, GSR p.281:1.30

Different translators prefer different words in translation, some using country rather than land, as in the Manichaean texts from Chinese Turkestan:

If there are people who suffer in the transmigration of hell,
in the fire of the *kalpa* (age) of destruction
and the eternal confinement, it is really
because they do not recognize the five Light-bodies,
and are therefore severed
from the country of peace and happiness.

Manichaean Hymns, LSMH p.197:247

Those who are not in contact with the "five Light-bodies", the five 'divisions' of the Word or Law, gain no release from transmigration, and are cut off from their true spiritual home.

See also: **desh**, **holy land**.

land flowing with milk and honey See **promised land**.

Life The state of being alive; mystically, the divine Source of life and consciousness; thus, by implication, eternal life, as in John's gospel:

In it (the *Logos*) was life,
and life was the light of men.

John 1:4, TYN

God so loved the world,
that he gave His Only-begotten Son *(i.e.* the *Logos)*,
that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,
but have everlasting life.

John 3:16, KJV

Highlighting the points of similarity between John's gospel and Mandaean literature, Life is also a Mandaean term for God, used on its own or in expressions such as Great Life, First Life and so forth. In a Mandaean exhortation to the soul, for instance, God is called "Great Life" while the "everlasting abode" is also called the "place of Life" and the "house of Life":

Bow yourself! and worship!
Prostrate yourself and praise the Great Life.
Praise the place of Life to which your fathers go....

Good one! Rise to the house of Life,
and go to the everlasting abode!
They will hang your lamp among lamps of light,
and they will shine in your time, and at your moment.
Arise! Behold the place of light!

Mandaean Prayer Book 92; cf. CPM pp.96–97

In another passage, God is praised as the eternal and self-existent First Life who existed before the world came into existence:

You were established, First Life:
You were in existence before all things.
Before You, no being existed.

Mandaean Prayer Book 24; cf. CPM p.20

In another, the writer says that one who knows this Great Life and keeps himself detached from the world is fortunate:

Well is it for him whom the Great Life knows,
but woe to him whom the Great Life knows not!
Well is it for him whom the Great Life knows,
who keeps himself alien from the world,
from the world of imperfection.

Mandaean Prayer Book 165; cf. CPM p.145

See also: **house of Life**, **place of Life**.

light (He. *aur*) See **aur**.

light of Your countenance (He. *aur panekha*) See **aur**.

Living God An expression used for God stemming from Middle Eastern terminology. God is said to be living because He is the source of life and being or consciousness. He is also described as living rather than dead to distinguish Him from the many idols and deities prevalent in the Middle Eastern religion in ancient times. The term is commonly associated with Christian writings, but also appears in the Hebrew Bible, and is analogous to the use of names for God such as Life and Great Life, as used by the gnostic Mandaeans.

The expression appears only three times in the four canonical gospels[1] where it is used by others, never by Jesus. In the New Testament, it is Paul who uses the expression the most frequently, often to emphasize the difference between the idols of the pagan temples and the source of life whom he regards as God. It appears in his well-known saying:

> What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?
> For ye are the temple of the Living God.
>
> *2 Corinthians 6:16, KJV*

Jesus, Paul and other early Christians would have been familiar with the expression from the Hebrew Bible, as in *Deuteronomy:*

> For who is there of all flesh,
> who has heard the Voice of the Living God
> speaking out of the midst of the fire,
> as we have, and lived?
>
> *Deuteronomy 5:23, JCL*

And likewise in the *Psalms:*

> As the hart longs for water streams,
> so does my soul long for you, O God.
> My soul thirsts for God, for the Living God:
> when shall I come and appear before God?
>
> *Psalm 42:2–3, JCL*

> How lovely are your dwelling places,
> O Lord of Hosts!
> My soul longs, indeed it faints
> for the courts of the Lord;
> My heart and my flesh cry out
> for the Living God.
>
> *Psalm 84:2–3, JCL*

Jeremiah points out that idols are made of dead materials by the "work of skilled men". They are dead. But the "true God" of which he speaks is the "Living God":

> Who would not fear You, O King of nations?
> For to You it is fitting;
> For among all the wise men of the nations,
> and in all their kingdoms,
> there is none like You.
> Stupid and foolish they all are:
> the instruction of their idols is just wood!
>
> Beaten silver is brought from Tarshish,
> and gold from Uphaz, the work of the craftsman,
> and of the hands of the goldsmith;
> Blue and purple is their clothing:
> they are all the work of skilled men.
> But the Lord is the true God,
> He is the Living God, and an everlasting King;
> At His anger, the earth shall tremble,
> and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation.
>
> *Jeremiah 10:7–10, JCL*

1. *John* 6:69; *Matthew* 16:16, 26:63.

Lord One having power or authority over others; the Supreme Being; God.

See **God**.

Lord of Hosts See **Yahweh Ẓeva'ot**.

Mādhav(a) (S/H/Pu), **Mādho** (H/Pu) An epithet of Kṛishṇa; *Mādho,* as a vernacular form of *Mādhava,* is a name of the God who is beyond all names. As a popular Hindu saying has it:

> *Hari* has a thousand names,
> *Kesho* has millions.
> *Vishṇu* has a billion names,
> and *Mādho* trillions.
>
> *Traditional Hindu Saying*

The name has been variously interpreted. Some say that the word means sweet, hence, *Mādhava* means the Sweet One. Others suggest that it means the Master *(Dhava)* of knowledge *(Mā)*; or, since *Mā* is an epithet of the goddess *Lakshmī*, the Lord of *Lakshmī*.

The term is common in the *Ādi Granth*, and is used extensively by Saints such as Ravidās, Tulsīdās, Kabīr and others, as for instance:

> You are my only support, O Lord *(Mādho)*....
> If You forsake me, who will keep me?
> Who will listen to my entreaties?
>
> *Ravidās, Vāṇī 73:1, 3, SGRV p.99*

Maḥbūb (A/P) *Lit.* beloved; an epithet of God and Master, used throughout Sufi literature.

See also: **Beloved**, **Dūst**.

makom (He) *Lit.* place, abode, dwelling; the dwelling place of God, the spiritual realm of eternity; also, God's presence. In the daily Jewish prayers, angels are depicted as singing:

> Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.
> The whole earth is full of His glory.
>
> *Isaiah 6:3, JCL*

And a great voice answers:

> Blessed be the glory of the Lord
> (that comes from) from His place *(makom)*.
>
> *Ezekiel 3:12, JCL*

The glory of God is His light, His spiritual radiance, His holiness, His divine power. The prayer thus celebrates the emanation of divine glory from the Lord's abode, His "place". It expresses the gratitude of one who witnesses this outpouring of divine love and power.

Makom also implies that God fills all space – that He is present everywhere.

See also: **lā-makān**.

Malik, al- (A/P) *Lit.* king, sovereign, monarch; ruler, master, lord *(malik);* hence, the King, the Sovereign *(al-Malik);* an epithet of God; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh:*

> Say: "I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind,
> the King *(al-Malik)* of mankind, the God of mankind."
>
> *Qur'ān 114:1–3, MGK*

Hujwīrī observes that in Sufi terminology, *Malik* signifies:

> He with whose actions it is impossible to interfere.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XXIV, KM p.387*

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**, **King**, **takht**.

Mālik, al- (A/P/U/H), **Mālak** (Pu) *Lit.* owner, possessor, master, lord *(mālik, mālak);* also, husband; hence, the Lord *(al-Mālik, Mālak);* an Arabic name used by many Middle Eastern and Indian mystics for the Supreme Being. The term is commonly used in the *Ādi Granth:*

> He who has created the world takes care of it:
> the true Cherisher is the Lord *(Mālak)* of all the hearts and minds.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 724, MMS*

Mālik al-kull (A), **Mālik-i kull** (P/U) *Lit.* Owner or Possessor *(Mālik)* of all *(kull);* the Lord of all things; the Supreme Being; though not used specifically, the name is implied in a number of verses in the *Qur'ān,* where it is said that the "dominion of everything *(malakūt kulli shai'in)*" is in His "hand":

> So glory be to Him, in whose hand
> is the dominion of everything,
> and unto whom you shall be returned.
>
> *Qur'ān 36:83, KI*

Mālik al-mulk (A), **Mālik-i mulk** (P) *Lit.* Owner *(Mālik)* of the creation *(al-mulk);* Lord of the creation; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh:*

> O *Allāh!* Lord of power (and rule) *(Mālik al-Mulk),*
> You give power to whom You please,
> and You strip power from whom You please;

You endue with honour whom You please,
and You bring low whom You please.
In Your hand is all good:
Verily, You have power over all things.

Qur'ān 3:26; cf. AYA

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

Mālik Yawm al-Dīn (A), **Mālik-i Yawm-i Dīn** (P/U) *Lit.* Lord *(Mālik)* of the Day *(Yawm)* of Judgment *(al-Dīn);* an Islamic name for God used in the *Qur'ān:*

Praise be to *Allāh,*
the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds:
Most Gracious, Most Merciful,
Master of the Day of Judgment *(Mālik Yawm al-Dīn).*

Qur'ān 1:2–4, HQSA

The term is sometimes shortened to *Mālik-i Dīn.* Rūmī says:

If the fire of your nature *(ātish-i ṭab')*
makes you suffer pain, it burns
by the command of the Lord of the Judgment *(Mālik-i Dīn).*
If the fire of your nature *(ātish-i ṭab')*
gives you joy, the Lord of religion puts joy therein.
When you feel pain, ask pardon of God:
pain by the command of the Creator is efficacious.
When He pleases, pain itself becomes joy:
bondage itself becomes freedom.

Rūmī, Maśnavī 1:834–37, MJR2 p.47

See also: **Yawm al-Dīn** (▸2).

malkut (He) *Lit.* kingdom; spiritually, the kingdom of God, the highest realm of the spirit. The term appears in the *Psalms* and other places in the Hebrew Bible, though it is usually unclear whether the meaning is specifically mystical or of a more general religious nature:

All Your works shall praise You, O Lord,
and Your pious ones shall bless You.
They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom *(malkut),*
and talk of Your power;

To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts,
and the glorious majesty of His kingdom *(malkut)*.
Your kingdom *(malkut)* is an everlasting kingdom *(malkut)*,
and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.

Psalm 145:10–13, JCL

And:

The Lord has established His throne in the heavens,
and His kingdom *(malkut)* rules over all.
Bless the Lord, O you His angels, you mighty ones,
who do His Word, listening to the Voice of His Word!
Bless the Lord, all His hosts!
O you His ministers, who do His will!
Bless the Lord, all His works,
in all places of His dominion!
Bless the Lord, O my soul!

Psalm 103:19–22, JCL

Among the *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz* (twelfth- and thirteenth-century German *Ḥasidim*), God's kingdom *(malkut)* was identified with His *kavod* (glory). It is the immanence of God, the manifestation of His divine presence in the creation. The German *Ḥasidim* called the 'visible glory' of God His 'kingdom', while the transcendent, formless or hidden presence of God, they called His 'Holiness *(Kodesh)*'.

In the Kabbalah, *Malkut* is the lowest of the *sefirot* (divine emanations). It stands at the gateway between the higher realms and the physical creation, transmitting the creative Power or Word into this world. This is why *Malkut* is also identified with the *Shekhinah* – another term for the divine presence as it dwells or manifests in the creation.

See also: **kingdom**, **Malkut** (4.1).

marom (He) *Lit.* high, above; hence, most high, high region; used descriptively of God.

See also: **El 'Elyon**, **shokhen marom**.

Ma'shūq (A/P) *Lit.* beloved; derived from *'ishq* (love); used throughout Sufi literature for both God and the Master:

Grasp the knocker on the Beloved's *(Ma'shūq)* door,
  and dedicate there your grief-stricken soul.

'Aṭṭār, in FNI2 p.205, in SSE2 p.35

See also: **Beloved**, **Dūst**.

Maṭlūb, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Sought, the Sought One; sometimes also called *maqṣūd al-maṭlūb* (the desired objective or aim). For the mystic seeker *(ṭālib)*, the Sought *(Maṭlūb)* is the divine Reality, the one God. Rūmī observes that it is a principle in life that whatever is sought moves towards the one who seeks. If there is a seeker of God, it means that "the Sought One is" already "seeking him":

It is a fact that whenever there is a seeker *(ṭālib)*,
  the soul of the Sought One *(Maṭlūb)* is seeking him.
Man, animal, plant or mineral –
  every object of desire is in love
  with whatever has not attained that object of desire.
Those who are without their object of desire
  attach themselves to an object of desire,
  and those desired ones draw them on;
But the desire of the lovers makes them gaunt,
  while the desire of the loved ones
  makes them fair and beauteous.
The love of the loved ones illumines their cheeks:
  the love of the lover consumes his soul.

Rūmī, Maśnavī III:4442–46; cf. MJR4 p.248

But, says an unknown poet in a verse attributed to both Rūmī and Ḥāfiẓ, the Sought One can only be found within:

Search not here and there
  for the intended object of both the worlds –
  the Sought *(Maṭlūb)* of the universe;
Do your seeking within your own soul!

Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz, GDST p.143, KST p.721; cf. in SSE2 p.45

Rūmī also equates the Sought One with the Saint:

The Prophet said, "O seeker *(ṭālib)* of the (divine) bounty beware!
Do not contend with a Sought One *(Maṭlūb)*." …

If you, being on foot, contend with a horseman,
  you will not save your head. Desist!

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1605, 1614; cf. MJR2 pp.88–89

See also: **ṭālib** (▸2).

Mazdā (Av) See **Ahurā Mazdā**.

Melekh (He) *Lit.* king, ruler; an epithet of God used in the Hebrew Bible.

See also: **King, al-Malik**.

mighty in battle (the), the mighty of war (He. *gibor milḥamah*), **man of war** (He. *ish milḥamah*) Biblical descriptions of God as the one who protects the spiritual seeker from his inner, human imperfections, giving him strength, dedication and devotion to wage the spiritual war. The Lord as "mighty in battle" is found in the *Psalms:*

Who is this King of glory?
The Lord strong and mighty,
  the Lord mighty in battle *(gibor milḥamah).*

Psalm 24:8, KJV

God as a man of war appears in the song sung by Moses and the people of Israel after their safe crossing of the Red Sea with Pharaoh and his soldiers in pursuit. Jewish mystical commentators commonly interpreted the flight from Egypt as an ascent to a higher level of spirituality, from a state of spiritual constriction symbolized by Egypt. The interpretation was justified by a wordplay in which the Hebrew for Egypt *(Miẓrayim)* is derived from the root *ẓar* (narrow or constricted). Likewise, Pharaoh and his armies were the enemies who symbolized human imperfection:[1]

The Lord is my strength and song,
  and He has become my salvation;
He is my God, and I will praise Him,
  my father's God, and I will exalt Him.
The Lord is a man of war *(ish milḥamah);*
  the Lord is His name.

Exodus 15:2–3, JCL

1. *e.g.* An interpretation found throughout the writings of Philo Judaeus; see also *Zohar* 1:82b–83a, 2:161a, 2:182a, *ZSS1* p.276, *ZSS4* pp.56, 115–16, *JCL*.

Moshia' (He) *Lit.* he saves, he delivers; hence, the Saviour.

See **Saviour**.

Mount Carmel A mountainous ridge in northwest Israel, reaching a height of about 1800 feet, running from the Samarian hills to the Mediterranean, ending immediately above the modern port of Haifa. Mount Carmel is described in *1 Kings* as the site of a contest between Elijah and the prophets of *Ba'al*. In Judaic and allied literature, the term is occasionally used as a metaphor for the eternal realm, as an extension of the more common term, holy mount or mountain of God. The term appears, for instance, in the Mandaean poem where the poet writes in the name of the mythical Saviour, *Mandā-ḍ-Hiia* (*lit.* Knowledge of Life, *Gnosis* of Life). Here, the ascent of the "mountain Carmel" signifies the ascent to God:

I ascended the mountain Carmel,
 you I ascended, mountain, Mount Carmel.
The mountain of Carmel I ascended.

Twelve vines awaited me:
 the vines saw me, the vines beheld me....
When they saw me the vines waxed great,
 they spread out their foliage.
They increased, spread out their foliage,
 increased their fruit and their blossom.

Yet they knew me not, did not discern me,
 nor did they take heed of me.
They knew me not, did not discern who I was.
The man who saw me and discerned me,
 his course is set for the place of Life!

You are the highest, *Mandā-ḍ-Hiia*,
 and lead all your friends to victory.
Mandaean Prayer Book 139; cf. CPM pp.125–26

Mandā-ḍ-Hiia, who has ascended to God, comes to the souls, the "vines", who live and flourish only because of this primal Power. Yet they do not know who or what it is. But the rare one – the initiate-to-be – who does recognize him, "his course is set for the place of Life". The "twelve vines" are possibly an allusion to the twelve tribes of Israel, here symbolic of the souls in this world.

The Mandaean poem provides an insight into one of the metaphors found in the *Song of Songs,* where the divine Beloved describes the lover (the soul), saying:

> Your head is held high like Carmel,
> and its plaits are as dark as purple;
> A king is held captive in your tresses.
>
> *Song of Songs 7:6, JB*

The lover's "head" represents the seat of the soul in the human form. It is "held high like Carmel", signifying God, the "head" of the creation. "Purple" symbolizes the innate 'royalty' of the soul, while the "king … held captive" in her hair (in her head) is the divine King, the Saviour – the Beloved – held captive by the bonds of love.

In about 500 CE, the physical Mount Carmel became the site of a church, and Greek monks built a monastery there. In the Middle Ages, it became renowned as the home of the Carmelite Order when St Berthold (*d.c.*1195) founded the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, claiming continuity with the tradition of hermits who had lived there for centuries before. After the failure of the crusades, the order was refounded in the Low Countries in 1452, spreading rapidly through France, Italy and Spain. During the sixteenth century, two great reformers and mystics of the Carmelite order – Teresa of Ávila and John of the Cross – did much to reintroduce a life of contemplation into the order. To both of these, Mount Carmel was symbolic of the ascent to God. As John of the Cross says in his introduction to the *Ascent of Mount Carmel:*

> All the doctrine whereof I intend to treat in this *Ascent of Mount Carmel* is included in the following stanzas, and in them is also described the manner of ascending to the summit of the Mount, which is the high estate of perfection which we here call union of the soul with God.
>
> *John of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel (Argument), CWJC1 p.9*

See also: **holy mount, mountains** (4.1).

Mount Zion See **holy mount**.

Mu'aththir al-ḥaqīqī, al- (A), **Mu'aśśir-i ḥaqīqī** (P) *Lit.* the real *(ḥaqīqī)* Cause *(Mu'aththir);* the ultimate Cause of all effects; God, the prime Mover. Rūmī observes:

> He who denies the action of the almighty Lord ... says,
> "There is smoke, but no fire;
> There is candlelight with no shining candle."
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī V:3011–12; cf. MJR6 p.181*

See also: **Karaṇ kāraṇ**.

Mubdi', al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Originator; the beginningless One; the originator of all; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh:*

> It is He who creates from the very beginning *(al-Mubdi'):*
> and He can restore (life).
>
> *Qur'ān 85:13, HQSA*

Among the gnostic *Ismā'īlīyah* (a branch of Shi'ite Muslims), *al-Mubdi' al-Awwal* (First Originator, First Cause) is the most common name for God.

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

Mudhill, al- (A), **Muźill** (P) *Lit.* the Humiliator, the Abaser, the Dishonourer; He who brings disgrace; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh;* contrasted with *al-Mu'izz* (the Bestower of honours). The name comes from the verb and other forms of the term in the *Qur'ān:*

> O *Allāh!* Lord of power (and rule),
> You give power to whom You please,
> and You strip power from whom You please;
> You endue with honour *(tu'izzu)* whom You please,
> and You bring low *(tudhillu)* whom You please.
> In Your hand is all Good:
> Verily, You have power over all things.
>
> *Qur'ān 3:26; cf. AYA*

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

mūl pad (H/Pu) *Lit.* root *(mūl)* or primal place *(pad);* the first abode; the ultimate abode; the eternal dwelling place.

See also: **mūl Nād** (3.1).

Nahuaque (Nahua) The Cause of All; a term for the Supreme Being among the Nahua people who once lived in the area now known as Mexico. According to the fifteenth-century mystic king, Nezahualcóyotl, the creation consists of nine worlds, the highest being the "only one God" who created all things:

> In the ninth world is the Cause of All, of us and of all created things,
> the only one God who created all things both visible and invisible.
>
> *Nezahualcóyotl, in FIN p.107*

Nāmī (H/Pu) *Lit.* named; the One named; the Reality or the Being denoted by the Name *(Nām);* the deity who is signified by *Nām;* He who is the source of *Nām* or the Sound Current; the Supreme Being, God. As Tulsīdās writes:

> The Name *(Nām)* and the Named *(Nāmī),*
> if truly understood, are identical.
> They are so tied together in love
> that the Named *(Nāmī),* the Lord,
> closely follows the Name *(Nām).*
>
> *Tulsīdās, Rām Charit Mānas 1:20.1, RCM p.31*

This understanding, as Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh says, is obtained through a *Guru:*

> When a *Guru* is found
> who knows the secret of *Nām,*
> he enables the soul to know the Sound Current
> and thereby to unite with its Source.
> Realization is thus attained of the Oneness
> between the Name *(Nām)* and the Named *(Nāmī).*
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 10:1.6–7, SBP p.95*

Nāmī is also used as an epithet of *Vishṇu.*

See also: **Nām** (3.1).

Nanderú Guazú (G) The Guaraní name for God; the Creator of the world, who existed alone before the world was created. *Nanderú Guazú* is called 'our Great Father' in the Apapokuvá Guaraní cosmogony recorded by Curt Nimuendajú. The Guaraní are a South American people of an area that is now Paraguay, South Brazil and Bolivia.

Though there are some variations in details among the different Guaraní groups, the Guaraní creation myth recounts that in the beginning *Nanderú Guazú* existed alone in darkness, where the eternal bats fought. A light was shining in the Creator's breast. He created the world, and placed it on the eternal wooden cross, the *ywyrá joasá re-ko'ypy.*[1]

Nanderú's companion, *Nanderú Mbaé-Kua'a,* then appears, and together they fertilize the first woman, who becomes *Nandé Cy,* 'Our Mother'. When *Nandé Cy* enters the garden created by *Nanderú Guazú,* she refuses to believe that the food He has made grew in just one day. Angered by this lack of belief, *Nanderú Guazú* leaves the earth, ascending beyond the sky, climbing along a trail left by the eternal jaguar.

Nanderú Guazú gives some of his powers to his son *Kurahy,* the sun god, one of the divine twins born of *Nandé Cy. Nanderú Guazú* bestowed the shaman's apparel on *Kurahy,* the first shaman, who made a gourd rattle, the *mbaraká,* and danced until *Nanderú Guazú,* his Father, took him away.

Some stories describe *Nanderú Guazú* as remaining apart from earthly life, and His commands are considered sacred. The Chiripá chief, Avá-Nembiará is quoted by Bartolomé as saying:

> We must not eat meat, but only those things which *Nanderú* has commanded us.
>
> *Avá-Nembiará, in SAC p.119*

Bartolomé also quotes a shaman who feels himself to be directly obeying the commands of *Nanderú Guazú:*

> I follow the orders of *Nanderú Guazú,* and in my dreams He listens to me and gives me knowledge.
>
> *Guaraní Shaman, in SAC p.128*

To some Guaraní, *Nanderú* may be a distant deity who influenced the world long ago, but the above statements indicate that *Nanderú* is a direct presence in the daily lives of others.

As Lawrence Sullivan points out, the idea of a Supreme Being is absent from the myths of most South American religions:

> Creation from nothing by supreme Beings is not the only means of producing the universe attested to in the mythic traditions of South America. In fact, it would be misleading to give the impression that most South American peoples describe the cosmogony in this way. They do not. In the myths recorded to date, the majority of South American cultures show little extended interest in absolute beginnings.
>
> *L.E. Sullivan, Icanchu's Drum, ID pp.32–33*

It would seem, then, that the Guaraní's belief in *Nanderú Guazú* is even more remarkable for being the exception in South America. Not only do the Guaraní believe in a Supreme Being, they also strive to listen to Him and to obey Him. *Nanderú Guazú* has entered their lives in a personal way, through the shamans who follow in the steps of the first great shaman, *Kurahy*, the son of *Nanderú Guazú*. A *paí guazú*, or great shaman, contacts the highest divinity, *Nanderú Guazú*, in his 'dreams'.

Not surprisingly, the Avá-Chiripá identified the figure of Jesus Christ, introduced into their culture by the Jesuits, with the great shamans of their own past. The Avá-Chiripá apparently had no difficulty accepting an earthly Saviour who became flesh, but was spirit who came from and would return to God.

There are a numbers of variants of the name, including *Ñanderuvusú, Ñandeyara, Ñanderausú, Ñandeyarapavé.*

See also: **ñe'eng-güery** (4.1), **oka-vusú** (4.1), **ywy mará ey** (4.1).

1. The creation story is taken from Miguel Bartolomé, *Shamanism Among the Avá-Chiripá.* According to Bartolomé, it is essentially the same as the Apapokuvá-Guaraní creation myth collected by Curt Nimuendajú, and published in 1914 in German; ed. & tr. J.F. Recalde in *Leyenda de la Creación y Juicio Final del Mundo;* entire text tr. & reassembled with commentary in *Los Mitos de Creación y de Destruccion del Mundo como Fundamentos de las Religion de los Apapokuvá-Guaraní,* ed. Jurgen Riester.

Nārāyaṇ(a) (S/H), **Narāiṇ**, **Nārāiṇ** (Pu) *Lit.* Lord, God; of uncertain derivation; the mythological Hindu deity from whom all creation has emerged; a synonym of *Vishṇu,* the supreme Lord of the Vaishnavites (devotees of *Vishṇu*), from whom everything has come into being; hence, by implication, *Brahman* (supreme Reality); also identified in some texts with *Brahmā* (the creator-deity).

The *Mahānārāyaṇa Upanishad* speaks of *Nārāyaṇa* as universal and immanent, pervading all, giving life to all, the creator of all, the "supreme Word imperishable". He is also identified as the supreme Reality, the *Brahmatattva* (the Reality of *Brahman*):

> God with a thousand heads, with an all-seeing eye,
>   granting peace to all –
> *Nārāyaṇa,* universal God, supreme Word imperishable –
>   on every side supreme, eternal, *Nārāyaṇa,* universal Lord.
>
> The entire universe is given existence
>   by the life force of this Person.

Master of all, Lord of the soul,
eternal, beneficent, unchanging –
Nārāyaṇa, the mighty one to be known,
the Self in all, the supreme goal.

Nārāiṇ is the supreme *Brahmatattva.*
Nārāyaṇa is the highest.
Nārāyaṇa is the supreme Light.
Nārāyaṇa is the infinite Self....

Whatever moves in the universe,
whatever is seen or heard,
whatever is within or without –
Everything is pervaded by *Nārāyaṇa.*
He is established therein.

Mahānārāyaṇa Upanishad 13:1–5; cf. VE p.158

In the *Ādi Granth, Nārāyaṇ* is the supreme and all-pervading Lord. Guru Arjun says:

On seeing the form, be thou not misled, O fool:
false is the world's love for lust.
None is allowed to stay in this world:
ever stable (eternal) is the one Lord *(Nārāiṇ)* alone.

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1077, MMS

And:

Night and day, the mortal ever wanders for the sake of wealth.
But rare is the one among millions
who enshrines the Lord *(Nārāiṇ)* in his mind, O Nānak.

Guru Tegh Bahādur, Ādi Granth 1427, MMS

See also: **Nārāyaṇa** (4.2).

Nāth(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* lord, patron, master, husband, support, helper, protector; an epithet of God, the creative Power and the Master:

He is the Master *(Nāth)* of the meek, and the Giver of peace to all:
Nānak's mind is imbued with the love of God's feet.

Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 154, MMS

And:

> The Lord's Name, for which crave many gods,
> whose service all the devotees perform,
> and who is the Patron (*Nāth*, Helper) of the patronless (*anāth*, helpless),
> and is the Destroyer of the pain of the poor:
> That Name is obtained through the perfect *Guru*.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1078, MMS*

See also: **al-Mālik**, **Nātha yoga** (▸2).

native abode See **abode**.

neẓaḥ (He) *Lit.* glory, eminence, victory; hence, endurance, perpetuity, eternity, forevermore; used in the *Psalms* to mean the victory over death that brings eternal spiritual life:

> You will show me the path of life;
> In Your presence is fullness of joy;
> At Your right hand there are pleasures for evermore *(neẓaḥ)*.
>
> *Psalm 16:11, JCL*

nij desh, nij des, nij dhām, nij ghar, nij pad (H/Pu) *Lit.* one's own *(nij)* country, land or territory *(desh)*, home *(dhām)*, house or home *(ghar)*, place or state *(pad)*; mystically, the true region or home of the soul; the original abode, the original region, the native land, the native home; the eternal abode; the divine Source of the soul's innermost being, from which it was separated at the time of creation. Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes:

> (Saints) have no other object in coming to this world (than the redemption of souls). Those who are *sanskārīs* (predestined by virtue of past association) are drawn to their holy feet as soon as they behold them and hear their words; many others receive *sanskāras* (impressions), and in course of time, they too will escape *chaurāsī* (birth and death). Except Saints, no one can save souls from *chaurāsī* and lead them to their native land *(nij desh)*.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Prose 2:217; cf. SB pp.121–22*

And:

The true spiritual practitioner is he who does everything with the sole object of having the vision of the Supreme Being, and winning His grace, so that He may give him a place in his real home *(nij dhām)*, that he may have perpetual bliss, and escape the pleasures and pains of birth and death.

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Prose 1:57; cf. SB p.39

And speaking of the final resting place of the soul which lies beyond the 'lower' aspects of the Godhead:

Beyond that is the nameless Being *(Anāmī Purush)*,
He who has been called indescribable *(akah)* and boundless *(apār)*.
No one but the Saints have access there:
it is known as the Saints' true home *(nij ghar)*.

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 5:1.18–19, SBP p.43

He also says that this eternal home can be reached by means of the Word or *Shabd:*

Attuned to the imperceptible, unfathomable *Shabd*,
it (the soul) enters the Lord of the Soul's (*Rādhā Swāmī*'s)
own dwelling *(nij pad)*.
It reaches its eternal absolute home *(ghar)*
and attains the immaculate condition *(gat)*;
After that, nothing more remains to be said.

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 1:2.14–15, SBP p.7

Guru Amardās says the same, referring to the creative Power as the Name:

With *Guru*'s love in the heart,
the beauteous bird (the soul) on the tree pecks at truth.
It drinks God's Nectar *(Hari Ras)*, abides in celestial bliss,
and flies not, nor comes and goes.
It obtains dwelling in its own home *(nij ghar)*,
and is absorbed in Lord God's Name *(Hari Hari Nām)*.

Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 66, MMS

See also: **dār, desh, dhām, land, place of my inheritance**.

Nirākār(a) (S/H), **Nirankār** (Pu) *Lit.* without *(nir)* form *(ākār)*; formless; hence, the formless One; the Supreme Being. The Lord is said to be beyond all form,

attributes, qualities and differentiation; He cannot be likened to any form in the creation; He is One, without division. It is His creation that has form and diversity:

> I bow to the self-luminous Lord
> who is free from attributes *(guṇas),*
> undifferentiated and desireless, ...
> formless *(nirākār),* the source of *Onkār (Brahm),*
> and the pure transcendental consciousness *(turīya).*
>
> *Tulsīdās, Rām Charit Mānas 7:107.1–2, RCM p.1139*

And:

> I pay homage to one God and the saintly true *Guru:*
> the formless One *(Nirankār)* is in the beginning,
> the middle and the end.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 250, MMS*

And:

> I (the Self) am without attributes or actions,
> eternal, without desire, changeless, formless *(nirākār),*
> and forever liberated.
>
> *Shankara, Ātmabodha 34*

See also: **arūpa**.

nirālā (H/Pu), **nirārā** (Pu) *Lit.* detached, in the sense of something set apart because of its uniqueness or dissimilarity to other things; thus, unique, peerless, beyond comparison, only one of its kind; hence also, curious, strange, weird; used on its own or in such expressions as *nirālā Purush* or *nirārā Purakh,* meaning the peerless Being, the unique One, the unrivalled Being, the unalloyed Lord.

Since the highest Lord is said to be pure oneness, beyond all the diversity of His creation, He is described as detached, peerless and unique, distinct and different from everything that He has made. He is the pure and aloof One, the only one of His kind, He who exists all by Himself. Since everything in existence has originated from Him, there is nothing with which He can be compared. Consequently, He is said to be beyond any comparison:

> The detached Lord *(nirārā Purakh)* is dearer to me than all,
> and His state none can comprehend.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 454, MMS*

Nirañjan(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* without *(nir)* stain *(añjan);* without taint, spot, mark; free from blemish or impurity; free from *māyā* (illusion). *Añjan* literally means lampblack or soot, and hence stain, spot or mark. In the *Upanishads, nirañjana* is used descriptively of God:

> He *(Paramātman)* is beyond all qualities –
> the witness, eternal, pure,
> of the essence of the indivisible,
> one-only, subtle, without components,
> without taint *(nirañjana),* without egoism,
> devoid of sound, touch, taste, sight and smell,
> devoid of doubt, without expectation –
> He is all-pervading, unthinkable and indescribable.
>
> *Ātma Upanishad 13, MUM p.14*

In later mystic literature, *Nirañjan* is used as an epithet of the Supreme Being: the pure One, the immaculate Lord, or He who has no differentiation, division or admixture of anything else, He who is pure oneness:

> That unknowable, changeless and immaculate Lord *(Nirañjan)*
> neither increases nor decreases.
>
> *Kabīr, Ādi Granth 343, MMS*

Nirañjan is also a name given by some Indian Saints to the ruler of the first of the heavenly regions *(sahans dal kanwal).*

nirbhay (H/Pu), **nirbhau** (Pu) *Lit.* without *(nir)* fear *(bhaya, bhau);* fearless, undaunted, brave; the fearless One; descriptive of the supreme Lord, of the creative Power, of a Master and of a soul who attains union with God. Since God is the creator of all, dwelling within all, having full knowledge of all things, there is no power greater than He. There is also nothing other than He. He therefore has no one and nothing of which to be afraid.

Man, however, generally feels separate from everything, and there are many things beyond his power to control. He cannot control his own mind, nor can he dictate the events of his life, nor does he know the future. He is therefore prone to fear and anxiety.

The only true escape from fear is to become one with the One who is beyond all fear. The source of all fear and uncertainty is thus removed. Man becomes God, and is thereby freed from all fear and doubt. Mahārāj Sāwan Singh writes:

> That One is without fear because He is the most powerful being and creator of all. Everything else has been created by Him. They are not His equals, and so He has no fear. No god or goddess or incarnation can be His equal.... By contemplating on Him, the devotees also become fearless.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Philosophy of the Masters 4, PM4 p.24*

Other mystics have written similarly:

> The Lord has written the writ of fear on the heads of all:
> Nānak, the true formless Lord alone is fearless *(nirbhau).*
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 464, MMS*

> Saints and sages, are united in saying:
> the Name *(Nām)* alone can make you fearless *(nirbhau)* and limitless.
>
> *Dariyā Sāhib, Dariyā Sāgar, Chaupaī 1044, DG2 p.105*

nirlep(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* without *(nir)* smearing *(lepa);* unsmeared, unstained, untainted, undefiled, uncontaminated, unsullied, untouched, detached; descriptive of God. Using a verb form of *lepa,* Kṛishṇa says in the *Bhagavad Gītā* that even though God may be incarnate in a Saint, He remains untainted by impurity:

> Actions do not defile *(na limpanti)* me,
> since I have no yearning for their fruit.
> He who knows me to be so is not bound by action.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 4:14; cf. BGT*

Guru Tegh Bahādur echoes the same:

> He who is called the Lord of the universe is above weal and woe,
> and He is ever detached *(nirlep).*
> He, the Lord, abides within thy inner self,
> like the reflection in a mirror, O Nānak.
>
> *Guru Tegh Bahādur, Ādi Granth 632, MMS*

The term is also used to describe a person who is entirely focused on God, and whose actions are not motivated by a desire for personal gain or by attachment to results. His actions leave no impression on the mind afterwards, and he remains unsullied *(nirlep)* by being in the world.

nirmal(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* without *(nir)* dirt *(mal);* free from blemish, free from dirt; pure, pristine, immaculate; hence, clear, transparent, clean, bright; thus, sinless, holy; descriptive of the supreme Lord or absolute Reality who is beyond all the imperfections of creation, and also of the Saints and the creative Power, since they are one with Him; commonly used by Indian sages and mystics:

> Having obtained the inner eye of wisdom,
> a person should become so absorbed
> in gazing at the firelike, resplendent *Brahman*
> that he attains the realization:
> "I am the undivided, pure *(nirmala)* and peaceful *Brahman.*"
>
> *Brahma Bindu Upanishad 21, HTU p.128*

> Just as luminosity is the nature of the sun,
> coolness of water, and heat of fire,
> so too the nature of the self *(ātman)* is eternity,
> purity *(nirmalatā),* reality, consciousness and bliss.
>
> *Shankara, Ātmabodha 24, ABSC p.50*

> Sublime are Thy saints in every age, O Lord....
> They have not the filth of sin, they are immaculate *(nirmal),*
> and ever remain absorbed in the Lord's devotion and love.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1025, MMS*

And:

> I have become pure *(nirmal)*
> and all stains have been removed.
> *Rādhā Swāmī,* my eternal Bridegroom
> blessed me with the Word *(Shabd).*
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 20:18.7, SBP p.165*

nirvair (Pu) *Lit.* without *(nir)* enmity *(vair);* without hatred; free from hostility; hence, amicable, friendly; a human virtue, also used descriptively for the Supreme Being. Enmity arises between people only when there is division, competition or a lack of knowledge and understanding. The Lord, on the other hand, is an ocean of oneness and love. There is nothing outside Him, He has complete knowledge and everything is contained within His love. From His point of view, the creation is nothing but waves of His love. Naturally, therefore, He has no enmity towards anyone. Hence, in the opening

stanzas of the *Ādi Granth*, Guru Nānak describes God as "without fear, without enmity *(nirvair)*". [1]Mahārāj Sāwan Singh explains the term:

> He could have feelings of enmity only if He had others like Him. But when He Himself is the warp and woof of the universe, then against whom can He feel enmity? Those who praise that One become devoid of enmity and hatred. Their hearts become calm. If anyone entertains feelings of enmity towards them, the waves of his hatred striking against their pure hearts return to the sender making him even more miserable.
>
> He is always without enmity. However sinful you may be, give up pride and do not be afraid of taking shelter with Him. Do not consider Him a dreadful Being. He is the embodiment of love. He is free from all defects.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Philosophy of the Masters 4, PM4 p.24*

A Master, too, being a personification of the Lord, is a living expression of freedom from all forms of ill will:

> O my uninimical *(nirvair,)* omnipotent, divine and beneficent true *Guru*,
> I am a sinner, and Thou my pardoner.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1141, MMS*

Mystics say that a person automatically acquires this characteristic as he travels on the path to God. Kṛishṇa says in the *Bhagavad Gītā:*

> He who does everything as if for me,
> regarding me as his supreme goal:
> He who is devoted to me, free from attachment,
> and without enmity *(nirvaira)* towards any being:
> He, O son of Pāṇḍu, will come to me.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 11:55*

1. Guru Nānak, *Ādi Granth* 1.

nirvikār(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* without *(nir)* change of form *(vikār)*; unchangeable, immutable; hence also, without defect, perversion, sickness or disturbance; mystically, descriptive of the One from whom all diversity and change emanate, yet who remains changeless. Thus, the *Muktikā Upanishad* portrays *Rāma* as being, "changeless *(nirvikāra)*, yet the witness to thousands of changes",[1] while Tulsīdās depicts God as:

Incomprehensible, desireless, nameless, formless,
indivisible and incomparable:
He is to be realized only through inner experience.
He is beyond the mind and the senses,
immaculate and imperishable;
He is changeless *(nirvikār)*,
illimitable and perfectly blissful.

Tulsīdās, Rām Charit Mānas 7:110.2–3, RCM p.1146

1. *Muktikā Upanishad* 1; *cf. TMU* pp.1, 209.

nischal dhām (Pu) *Lit.* immovable *(nischal)* abode *(dhām);* the unchanging eternal home of the soul. God is said to be immovable because He is the source of everything; the entire creation lives and moves and exists within His orbit. Consequently, there is nowhere for Him to move, for He is all there is. Motion only exists in the creation where there is differentiation. But He is the One in whom there is no division and no motion.

See also: **abode**, **dār**, **dhām**.

nishchal(a) (S/H), **nischal**, **nihchal** (Pu) *Lit.* without *(nish)* movement *(chal);* still, immovable, unchanging, immutable, fixed, steady, stable, unwavering, quiet; hence, everlasting, eternal; descriptive of God and eternity:

None is allowed to stay in this world:
ever stable (*nihchal,* unchanging) is the one Lord alone.

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1077, MMS

Ever moveless (*nihchal,* immutable) is the one imperishable *(abināsī)* Lord:
himself, he who meditates on Him
becomes eternal (*nihchal,* unchanging) as well.

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1076, MMS

Nishchal is also used to refer to the steadiness of mind in concentrated meditation, including the state of eternal rest and blessedness.

See also: **nishchal** (▸2).

nitya (S/H) *Lit.* eternal, everlasting, perpetual, ceaseless, immutable, regular, fixed, constant, essential; descriptive of the absolute Reality, as portrayed in the *Upanishads:*

> That which cannot be seen or grasped,
> which has no origin or attributes,
> no eyes or ears, no hands or feet;
> Which is eternal *(nitya)*, omnipresent,
> all-pervading and extremely subtle;
> Which is imperishable and the source of all beings:
> That the wise regard as the Source of all beings.
>
> *Muṇḍaka Upanishad 1:1.6*

And:

> Realize That to be *Brahman*,
> which is existence-knowledge-bliss,
> which is undivided, infinite, eternal *(nitya)* and One,
> which fills all places above and below.
>
> *Shankara, Ātmabodha 56*

Nitya is also used to describe the essential nature of the soul, as a spark of the divine eternity.

See also: **ananta**, **eternal realm**, **eternity**.

nogah (He) *Lit.* glow, brightness; a biblical term for the light of God's radiant or glowing presence. In *2 Samuel*, King David is described as experiencing God's awesome manifestation and presence. Fire, light and sound emanate from God, creating an elemental storm of incredible magnitude:

> Then the earth shook and trembled;
> The foundations of heaven moved and shook,
> because He was wroth.
> There went up a smoke out of His nostrils,
> and fire out of His mouth devoured:
> Coals were kindled by it.
>
> He bowed the heavens also, and came down,
> and darkness was under His feet.
> And He rode upon a cherub, and did fly:
> and He was seen upon the wings of the wind.
> And He made darkness pavilions round about Him,
> dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.
>
> Through the brightness *(nogah)* before Him
> were coals of fire kindled.

The Lord thundered from heaven,
  and the Most High uttered His Voice.
2 Samuel 22:8–14, KJV

In the Kabbalah, *nogah* was used specifically for the pure and redemptive light of God. It is pure because it is beyond colour. Some Kabbalists used the term to express the supreme oneness of God prior to His emanation and separation into the different qualities or *sefirot* (emanations) symbolized by the colours comprising white light.

In *The Holy Coin*, the thirteenth-century Rabbi Moses de León (author of the *Zohar*) writes about the different levels of spiritual light. In his system, *nogah* is the light that 'receives' the light of *zohar* (radiance).

In the sixteenth century, Rabbi Ḥayyim Vital (1542–1620), discussing meditation on light, described even more levels of spiritual light, corresponding to the *sefirot* through whose interplay the creation took place. In his system, *nogah* is placed at the level of the *sefirah* of *gevurah* (strength, judgment).

See also: **sefirot** (4.1).

Nūr, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Light; God, as the source of all spiritual light, the light of true Being; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh;* originating in the *Qur'ān,* stemming from such verses as:

God is the light *(nūr)* of the heavens and the earth;
The likeness of His light *(nūr)* is as a niche wherein is a lamp –
  (the lamp in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star) –
  kindled from a blessed Tree,
  an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West,
  whose oil well nigh would shine,
  even if no fire touched it;
Light *(nūr)* upon light *(nūr):*
(God guides to His Light whom He will).
Qur'ān 24:35, KI

This enigmatic parable, of which many interpretations have been given, was the subject of al-Ghazālī's *Mishkāt al-Anwār (The Niche for Lights).*

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná, ḍiyā'** (▸2), **nūr** (▸2).

nūr-i mahal (P) *Lit.* palace *(mahal)* of light *(nūr);* the refulgent house or celestial abode; the source of the divine Light; eternity.

See also: **al-Nūr**.

ohel (He) *Lit.* tent, tabernacle.

See **house of God**.

'olam (He) *Lit.* realm; hence, world, level; hence also, eternity, everlastingness, of old. *'Olam* means 'realm' in the senses of both time (as eternity) and space (as level or world). Thus, the biblical expression, *me'olam ve'ad 'olam*, commonly translated as 'eternally', literally means 'from realm to realm', and hence 'from eternity to eternity', implying the realm of the spirit that exists outside the human understanding of time and space. The term is used in the *Psalms:*

> Remember, O Lord, Thy tender mercies and Thy truth *(ḥesed),*
> for they have been from of old *(me'olam).*
>
> *Psalm 25:6, KB*

Here, *'olam* is commonly translated as 'of old', meaning 'from eternity'. *Ḥesed* includes both love and truth in its spread of meaning. The psalmist is saying that God's love and truth are both aspects of His eternity.

See also: **'olam** (4.1).

One (The) The One outside whom there is no other; the One who is the source of all multiplicity; God, the Supreme Being.

Many mystics and many religions have described God as the One, since He is the one Source and Author of everything. Within Himself, He is also one and complete, without division or imperfection of any kind. He is "the One who is, who is silent, the One who is from the beginning",[1] "the One who truly exists",[2] "the indivisible One and the One who is at rest",[3] and so on. But He can also be found within oneself, as an unknown writer of early Christian times says:

> Open the door for yourself that you may know the One who is. Knock on yourself that the Word *(Logos)* may open for you. For He is the king of faith and the sharp sword, having become all for everyone because He wishes to have mercy on everyone.
>
> *Teachings of Silvanus 117; cf. NHS30 pp.364–67, TS pp.78–79*

See also: **Anokhi**, **Ekankār**.

1. *Marsanēs* 13, *NHS15* pp.278–79.
2. *Allogenēs* 48, *NHS28* pp.198–99.
3. *Allogenēs* 60, *NHS28* pp.222–23.

Onkār(a) (S/H/Pu), **Oṃkār** (H/Pu) *Lit.* the sound of *Om; kār* or *kāra* are suffixes added to letters or syllables, conferring the meaning 'the sound of'; used synonymously with *Om* in the *Upanishads* and by various yogic paths to represent the absolute *Brahm* or *Brahman;* also, the creative Sound *(Om)* emanating from *Brahman;* regarded as the most sacred word of the *Vedas,* and hence commonly used by yogis as a *mantra.*

Just as *Brahm* is used as a name for the supreme Lord by some Indian Saints, as in the *Ādi Granth,* so too is *Onkār:*

> The one Lord *(Onkār)* has created the whole world:
> all the play and show are the manifestation of Thy glory, O God.
> The true Lord Himself creates all the distinctions,
> and Himself breaks and builds.
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 1061, MMS*

Onkār is also used as a name for the ruler of the second spiritual realm, the universal mind, also called *trikuṭī,* and equated with *Brahman* by Kabīr, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh and some other Indian Saints:

> In *trikuṭī* the melody of *Onkār* resounds.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 30:25.5, SBP p.253*

> A magician's show has the Creator set in motion:
> through *Onkār,* He has brought the whole universe into being.
> From the decoration of the five *tattvas* (elements)
> and the three *guṇas* (attributes), the entire illusion has sprung.
>
> *Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 2, Nirakh Prabodh kī Ramainī 2:8, KSS2 p.110*

See also: **Ekankār**, **Onkār** (3.1, 4.2).

Ormazd (Pv) God; the Pahlavi (Middle Persian) variant of the Avestan, *Ahurā Mazdā.*

See **Ahurā Mazdā**.

Pād Shāh (P), **Pātsāh**, **Pātshāh** (Pu) *Lit.* king, sovereign; metaphorically, the Lord or Master; used especially in the *Ādi Granth:*

> God, who fashioned the world, has by diverse contrivances
> created the creation of various colours and kinds.
> Having created the creation, He, as it pleases His Honour,
> beholds His handiwork.
> Whatever pleases Him, He does that:
> to Him, no one can issue an order.
> He is the King *(Pātsāh)*, the Emperor *(Pātsāhib)* of kings:
> Nānak remains subject to His will.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 6, MMS*

> There is but one throne and one King *(Pātsāh):*
> the absolute Lord is contained in all places.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1188, MMS*

The term is commonly used by Sikhs for the Sikh *Gurus*. Hence, their ministries are known as the first *pādshāhī* (kingship), the second *pādshāhī* and so on.

See also: **King**, **al-Malik**, **sachchā Pātshāh**.

Palm Tree See **Date Palm**.

parabrahma (S), **parbrahm** (H), **pārbrahm** (Pu) *Lit.* beyond *(par, pār) Brahm*, *Brahm* being a name for God, *pār* being a prefix indicating the supremacy of God; thus, transcendent, limitless; popularly used in praise of the highest Reality or God; Guru Arjun, for instance, describes both God and the *Guru* as *pārbrahm:*

> As it pleases Thee, so cherish Thou me, O Lord:
> Thou art my supreme Lord-Master and the true *Guru*
> *(pārbrahm Parmesar Satgur).*
> I am Thy child, and Thou art my compassionate Father.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 828, MMS*

And in the invocation:

> Thou, O limitless *(pārbrahm)* lofty Lord-Master,
> art the inner knower of all the hearts.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 192, MMS*

In the terminology of Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh and some other Saints, *pārbrahm* also refers to the realm above *trikuṭī* or *Brahm* (the universal mind), also called *daswān dwār* (tenth door) and *sunn* (void), where the soul becomes free from all coverings of mind and body.

See also: **parbrahm** (4.1).

paradise of light The eternal realm, in Manichaean texts, as in a hymn of praise addressed to Mānī:

> God, the righteous One, has come from the paradise of light,
> the helpful One, the truly powerful One.
>
> *Manichaean Hymns, HR2 p.92ff.; ML pp.52–53*

The "righteous One", the "helpful One" or the "powerful One" is the Saviour or Master, in this case Mānī.

param(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* best, most excellent, greatest, principal, chief, original, most prominent, most distant, supreme, utmost, uttermost, extreme, transcendent, perfect; used in descriptions of the Supreme Being:

> You are the supreme *(parama) Brahman,*
> the supreme abode *(paramadhāma),* the utterly holy.
> You are the eternal, divine, primal God,
> the unborn and all-pervading Being.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 10:12*

And:

> O perfect Lord of supreme *(param)* light,
> all the beings belong to Thee.
> As Thou keepest me, so do I live,
> O my illimitable and infinite Lord.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 815, MMS*

param(a) dhām(a) (S/H/Pu), **param(a) pad(a)** (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* supreme *(param)* home *(dhām),* place, stage, state or status *(pad);* the eternal region; the native home of the soul. In October 1877, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, speaking to his successor Bābā Jaimal Singh of his imminent departure from this world, observed:

> This is our last meeting. Now I shall go away to the *param dhām*, after completing my life's pilgrimage. I have made you my Beloved and my own *rūp* (self or form).
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, in Spiritual Letters, SL p.xv*

Or, as Guru Rāmdās says:

> By *Guru*'s Word *(Bachan)*,
> I have meditated on the invisible and inapprehensible Lord,
> and have obtained the pure supreme status *(param pad)*.
>
> *Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 442, MMS*

See also: **dhām**, **nij dhām**.

Paramākshara (S), **param Akshar** (H) *Lit.* supreme *(param)* Imperishable *(Akshar);* the supreme, imperishable Being; the supreme, imperishable One; the supreme Lord; used for *Brahman* in Hindu sacred literature, as in the *Bhagavad Gītā:*

> *Brahman* is the supreme Imperishable *(Paramākshara):*
> Its dwelling in each individual body is called the self.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 8:3*

See also: **Akshar**.

Param(a) Purush(a) (S/H), **Param Purakh** (Pu) *Lit.* Supreme *(Param)* Being *(Purush);* the highest Being, the supreme Lord. Kṛishṇa says in the *Bhagavad Gītā:*

> He who meditates continuously on me,
> with a mind trained in the practice of spiritual communion,
> freed from the tendency to wander on to other things,
> he will go to the refulgent, Supreme Being *(Paramapurusha)*.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 8:8; cf. BGT*

The expression is often used in the context of a true Master *(Guru)* being one with the Supreme Being.

Paramātmā (S/H/Pu), **Paramātman** (S) *Lit.* supreme or highest *(param)* Spirit, Soul or Self *(Ātmā);* God, the Lord, the Supreme Being; used by later Indian

Saints, but originating in Hindu sacred literature, where it means the highest Reality, synonymous with *Brahman:*

> *Paramātmā* ... is the eternal, the pure, the liberated,
> of the nature of wisdom, the true, the subtle, the all-pervading,
> the secondless, the ocean of bliss.
>
> *Maitreya Upanishad 1, TMU pp.20, 218*

> Incomprehensible is that supreme Spirit *(Paramātmā),*
> unlimited, unborn, beyond reason and beyond thought.
>
> *Maitrī Upanishad 6:17*

> *Brahman* alone is *Paramātmā.*
>
> *Nirālamba Upanishad 5; cf. TMU pp.15, 216*

This *Paramātmā* is also the "highest Self" within everything:

> The Supreme *Purusha* in this body is called the Perceiver,
> the Permitter, the Supporter, the Enjoyer,
> the great Lord and the highest Self *(Paramātmā).*
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 13:22*

In the *Bhagavad Gītā,* the distinction is drawn between the *ātman* or individual soul and the *Paramātmā,* the supreme Soul or *Brahman.* Kṛishṇa teaches that the essence of the *ātman* is the Supreme. As such, he says, the truest or most real part of the soul always remains free from action *(karma),* suffering and the ills of this world, as does *Brahman* or the *Paramātmā:*

> Being without beginning,
> and without attributes *(nirguṇa),*
> the supreme Self *(Paramātmā),*
> though dwelling in the body (as the soul),
> remains actionless and untouched (by action).
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 13:31*

The mystic Kabīr also says that the Lord is in the soul and the soul in the Lord:

> As the tree is contained in the seed,
> and the seed dwells in the tree –
> So does the soul dwell in the Lord *(Paramātmā).*
>
> *Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 1, Shabd 4:1, KSS1 p.2*

The term also appears as *pārbrahm Paramātmā*, meaning the supreme Soul *(Paramātmā)* beyond *(pār) Brahm*. Depending on the context, the term refers either to the ruler of *pārbrahm* or to the supreme, transcendent Lord.

Parameshvar(a) (S/H), **Parmesar**, **Parmeshar** (Pu) *Lit.* supreme *(param)* Lord *(Īshvara);* almighty God, the Supreme Being and other deities. In the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā, Parameshvara* is synonymous with *Brahman:*

He is the supreme Lord *(Parameshvara):*
He is the ruler of beings,
and He is the sustainer of beings.

Maitrī Upanishad 7:7

The worlds arise like bubbles in water,
existing and dissolving in the supreme Self *(Parameshvara);*
For that is the cause and sustenance of everything.

Shankara, Ātmabodha 8

He who sees the supreme Lord *(Parameshvara)*
dwelling alike in all beings,
and not perishing when they perish –
Truly, he sees.

Bhagavad Gītā 13:27

Guru Arjun says that the supreme Lord or *Parmesar* lies beyond the knowledge of the *Vedas:*

The *Vedas* know not God's greatness:
Brahmā can realize not His secrets.
The incarnations know not His limit:
infinite is God, the transcendent Lord *(pārbrahm Parmesar).*

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 894, MMS

The term also appears in superlative form, as in *pārbrahm pūran Parmesar* (transcendent and perfect Lord). Guru Arjun writes:

The transcendent Lord *(pārbrahm)* is the perfect Master *(pūran Parmesar):*
O my soul (*man,* mind), hold fast to His protection
who has established the universe and continents:
O man, repeat the Name of that God.

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 209, MMS

perfect aeon, perfect Blessed One, perfect Light, perfect Mother-Father, perfect One Some of the many epithets of God, found particularly in early Christian gnostic literature.

See **perfection**.

perfection The state of being perfect; the highest degree of any particular quality. Mystically, God has always been described as perfection. Mystics have added that man must acquire the virtues constituting human perfection as a part of the spiritual journey towards union with the divine, human perfection being a reflection of divine perfection. Jesus summarizes the matter in characteristically succinct style:

> Be ye therefore perfect,
> even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.
> *Matthew 5:48, KJV*

From God's point of view, His perfection is His oneness, His purity and His love. In Himself, there is only purity and oneness; there is nothing other than Him. He is Himself alone. Consequently, He is perfectly pure, unmixed with anything else. In His creation, He is the author of all, the intelligence within all, the order within all. If it is said that the creation has imperfection, then that is only from the point of view of the creation. From His point of view, it is entirely as He wants it: perfectly imperfect.

Mystics and gnostics more than all others understand these divine qualities, and terms attributing perfection to God are commonly found in the early Christian writings. For instance, the Lord is called the "complete, perfect One",[1] the "holy and perfect Mother-Father",[2] the "perfect *aeon*",[3] the "self-begotten perfect One",[4] the "perfect Light",[5] and so on. He is also described as "good, faultless, perfect, complete",[6] "perfect, having no defect",[7] the "blessed and perfect One of the eternal and incomprehensible Father and the infinite Light",[8] and by other descriptions of the same kind.

Moreover, since God is beyond all the duality of His creation, it can also be said that He is beyond perfection and imperfection. Hence, the writer of the gnostic revelation, *Allogenēs* says:

> He is perfect, and He is greater than perfect....
> [He is prior to perfection]....
> He entered into Himself and He manifested,
> being all-encompassing,
> that universal One who is higher than perfect....
> (He is) the God who is beyond perfection.
> *Allogenēs 47, 53, 61; cf. NHS28 pp.196–97, 208–9, 224–25*

See also: **aeons** (4.1), **perfection** (▸2), **pūrṇa**.

1. *Tripartite Tractate* 53, *NHS22* pp.194–95.
2. *Apocryphon of John* 14, *NHS33* p.85.
3. *Apocryphon of John* 31, *NHS33* p.175.
4. *Gospel of the Egyptians* 66, *NHS4* p.156.
5. *Trimorphic Protennoia* 45, *NHS28* pp.422–23.
6. *Tripartite Tractate* 53–54, *NHS22* pp.196–97.
7. *Eugnostos the Blessed* 72, *NHS27* p.56.
8. *Second Treatise of the Great Seth* 59; *cf. NHS30* pp.172–73.

place of emancipation, place of Life, place of light, place of my inheritance, place of salvation, place of the blessed, place of the true God Also as pure place, holy place and similar variants; terms for the eternal realm or kingdom of God, as in the gnostic text:

> Matthew said, "Lord, I want to see that place of Life …
> where there is no wickedness,
> but rather there is pure light!"
>
> *Dialogue of the Saviour 132:27, NHS26 p.65*

Again, speaking of those who will attain salvation through the "perfect One", the gnostic writer of the *Gospel of Truth* says that they will find spiritual rest or peace in the "place of the blessed":

> The Father is within them and they are in the Father,
> being perfect, being undivided in the truly good One,
> being in no way deficient in anything,
> but they are set at rest, refreshed in the Spirit.
> And they will heed their Root.
> They will be concerned with those (things)
> in which he will find his Root,
> and not suffer loss to his soul.
> This is the place of the blessed:
> this is their place.
>
> *Gospel of Truth 42, NHS22 pp.116–17*

In the gnostic *Pistis Sophia,* the story is told of the soul's escape from the realms where "destiny" reigns, for she is now going to the "place of my inheritance":

> And that soul dismisses their destiny to them, saying: "Receive back your destiny; I do not come to your places from this time (forward);

I have become a stranger to you forever, and I shall go to the place of my inheritance."

Pistis Sophia 289:112, PS pp.578–79; cf. PSGG p.241

Similarly, in the *First Book of Jeu:*

Again you will cross over them all
into the places of those of the innermost,
until you go to the place of the true God.

First Book of Jeu 89:39, BC pp.104–5

Expressions such as the "place of Life" are very common in the Mandaean texts, where "Life" is a term for God. Speaking of the Creative Word as the "Wellspring of Life", one text says:

This is a Wellspring of Life
which sprang forth from the place of Life.

Mandaean Prayer Book 45, CPM p.41

Another exhorts the soul:

Clothe your souls in garments of radiance
and in good pure vestments of light,
which he (the Saviour) will bring you
from the great place of light
and the everlasting abode.

Mandaean Prayer Book 76, CPM pp.80–81

In another, the Saviour says:

I will deliver you from the wicked,
and save you from sinners.
I will set you in your *shkinta* (inner dwelling),
in the pure place, I will rescue you!

Mandaean Prayer Book 165; cf. CPM p.145

Similar terms are used in the Manichaean literature:

Rest shall be yours in the place of salvation,
in the company of all the gods
and those who dwell in peace.

Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VI:73; cf. MHCP pp.152–53

And in another, where the "Law" and "right Law" refer to the creative Power:

> Leap with joy, and stand firm by the right Law,
> cultivate industriously your wisdom and kindness,
> and abide by the Law.
> Give up altogether all (religious) practices and customs,
> and decide to rest your minds in the place of emancipation.
>
> Better now freely, for the sake of nature,
> be able to part with all the habits of passion and desire.
> Otherwise when the day of impermanence (death)
> comes suddenly to oppress you, what can help you,
> (even) if you regret and repent at the last moment?
>
> *Manichaean Hymns; cf. LSMH p.186:114–15*

See also: **sat pad**.

port See **harbour**.

Prabhu (S/H/Pu), **Prabh** (Pu) *Lit.* lord, ruler, sovereign, owner; one who has complete power; hence, the Almighty; a name of God:

> I have sought refuge in Your company, O Lord *(Prabhu)*,
> O sustainer and protector of the world.
>
> *Ravidās, Vāṇī 115:1, SGRV p.116*

And, in the *Bhagavad Gītā,* where the disciple, Arjuna, is talking to his Master, Kṛishṇa:

> O supreme Lord *(Parameshvara)*,
> You are even as You have declared Yourself to be.
> But now, O best of Beings, I wish to see
> that form of Yours as God of all.
> O Lord *(Prabhu)*, if you think me worthy
> of experiencing Your immutable form,
> then, O Master of *yoga*, deign to reveal it to me.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 11:3–4; cf. BGT*

See also: **al-Malik**.

Prabhu Swāmī (H/Pu), **Prabh Swāmī** (Pu) *Lit.* Sovereign *(Prabhu)* Lord *(Swāmī);* the ruling Lord, the supreme Lord; a name of God that epitomizes the Eastern custom of adding superlative to superlative in praise of God or in honour of revered persons.

Prītam (H/Pu) *Lit.* beloved; beloved one, dearest one, favourite one; friend, lover, sweetheart, husband; mystically, the divine Beloved; the Lord or Master, the beloved of the soul:

> Thinking that someone will annul my agonies,
> I am tired of making many friends.
> By meeting my Beloved *(Prītam)* my woes ended,
> and I have attained union with the Lord.
> The truthful person has true reputation:
> he possesses the wealth of truth, and truth he earns.
> Having become virtuous, O Nānak,
> they who meet the true *Guru* separate not again.
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 37, MMS*

See also: **Beloved, Dūst**.

promised land The land of Canaan, promised by God to the Israelites as their heritage, and conquered by them under His direction, according to the story related in *Genesis, Exodus* and so on; metaphorically, the heavenly realms, particularly the eternal realm.

Since the soul's essence and source is the Lord, and its true inheritance is eternity, the promised land is an apt metaphor for the home of the soul. It is also called the 'good land' because it is the source of eternal goodness and bliss, and "a land flowing with milk and honey"[1] in the sense that the spiritual realms flow with the sweet nourishment of the spirit.

The metaphor of the promised land first appears in *Genesis* when God promises special land to the offspring of the patriarch Abraham (Abram):

> In the same day, the Lord made a Covenant with Abram, saying, "To your seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates."
>
> *Genesis 15:18, JCL*

Later in *Genesis,* the nature of the Covenant is more completely described:

> And I will establish my Covenant between me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting Covenant, to be a God to you, and to your seed after you. And I will give to you, and to your seed after you, the land where you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.
>
> *Genesis 17:7–8, JCL*

Metaphorically, the promise of this land is that of continual spiritual grace, and the attainment of inner spiritual heights. The "Covenant" between God and the "generations" following Abraham symbolizes the relationship of God to man, his descendants signifying, perhaps, his spiritual children or disciples. The *Zohar* says that at the time of the Covenant, Abraham was put in touch with God's Word or Name. Such contact brings about mystic experience of the inner spiritual regions. Later mystics, such as the third-century Mānī, speak of both the *Torah* (Law) and the Covenant as the Creative Word. It is an "everlasting Covenant" in the sense that the Word is an eternal bond between man and God, and the means of man's salvation.

The pledge of the promised land is carried forward into *Exodus* and the remainder of the Bible as "a land flowing with milk and honey", which God promises to the children of Israel if they adhere to the "Covenant". Understood as an allegory, it means that God has compassion for the souls (the children of Israel), sending them a redeemer or prophet (Moses) who has contact with God, to rescue them from the dominion of the negative power (Pharaoh), who has enslaved the souls in the physical universe (Egypt). Subsequently, they are taken by a narrow crossing (the Red Sea), and embark upon the long and arduous spiritual struggle while still living in the desert of this world (the Sinai desert). During their crossing of this desert, they are frequently tempted, but they spend forty years being fed with *manna* (Bread from heaven, the Creative Word or *Logos*), and are ultimately led by their redeemer to "a land flowing with milk and honey", the promised land (the eternal realm):

> And He said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.
>
> And the Lord said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows. And I have come down to save them from the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them out of that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey; to the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites."
>
> *Exodus 3:6–8, JCL*

In *Deuteronomy*, using a literary style of the times, God 'speaks', promising the children of Israel "a land that flows with milk and honey" in exchange for their love and obedience. The meaning can again be understood allegorically and spiritually:

> Therefore shall you keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that you may be strong, and go in and possess the land which you are going over to possess. And that you may prolong your days in the land, which the Lord swore to your fathers to give to them and to their seed, a land that flows with milk and honey.
>
> For the land, which you enter to possess, is not as the land of Egypt, from where you came out, where you sowed your seed, and watered it with your foot, as a garden of vegetables. But the land, which you are going over to possess, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinks water from the rain of the skies. A land which the Lord your God cares for; the eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.
>
> *Deuteronomy 11:8–12, JCL*

Throughout the history of Jewish mysticism, the *Genesis* and *Exodus* stories have be commonly understood allegorically. Philo Judaeus, the first-century Alexandrian Jew and prolific biblical commentator, identifies this Covenant with the *Logos*. Interpreting *Genesis*, he speaks of "His *Logos*, which He calls His Covenant".[2] He also says, more generally, that "the Covenant of God is an allegory of His gifts of grace."[3] And he identifies the promised land with Wisdom, another name for the *Logos* or creative Power:

> What land does he mean, but … the land whose fruit is the sure and steadfast apprehension of the Wisdom of God.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, Who is the Heir of Divine Things 62, PCW4 pp.444–45*

He then extends his interpretation, identifying "Egypt" (as he does in many other places) as the "body" and the river Euphrates as "that truly great River" of Wisdom. That is, the quest for the promised land begins in Egypt, the body, and ends with the Euphrates, the creative Power:

> Then he continues, "from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates". Here he shows how it stands with the perfected. Their perfecting begins with the body and senses and the parts which serve as organs, without which we cannot live, since they are needed for our training while in the life of the body. It ends in the attainment of the Wisdom of God, that truly great River, brimming over with joy and gladness and all other blessings.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, Who is the Heir of Divine Things 62, PCW4 pp.444–47*

The thirteenth-century *Zohar*, also interpreting *Genesis* allegorically, retells the story of the refusal of Abraham (Abram) to accompany his nephew Lot who has reverted to idolatry, symbolizing material tendencies. Instead, he goes to the "land of Canaan", the "place where faith" is "strengthened" and wisdom learnt:

> Therefore, Abram refused to accompany Lot; and for all that Lot did not turn from his evil course, ... and did not seek to perfect himself in faith like Abram. "So Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan," to cleave to the place where faith could be strengthened and to learn wisdom in order to cleave to his Master.
>
> *Zohar 1:84b, ZSS1 p.281, JCL*

See also: **Covenant** (3.1), **desert** (6.2), **Egypt** (6.2), **manna** (3.1).

1. *Deuteronomy* 6:3, 11:9, 26:9,15, 27:3, 31:20; *Ezekiel* 20:6,15; *Exodus* 3:8, 8:8,17, 13:5, 33:3; *Jeremiah* 11:5, 32:33; *Joshua* 5:6; *Leviticus* 20:24; *Numbers* 13:27, 14:8, 16:13–14; see also *Genesis* 17:1*ff.*
2. Philo Judaeus, *On Dreams* II:36; *cf. PCW5* pp.548–49.
3. Philo Judaeus, *The Sacrifices of Cain and Abel* 14, *PCW5* pp.136–37.

pure land See **land**.

pure place See **place of emancipation**.

pūrṇa (S/H), **pūrā** (H/Pu), **pūraṇ** (H), **pūran** (Pu) *Lit.* full, complete, whole, perfect; having no deficiency or defect; mystically, the perfection of God, the creative Power, the Master and eternity, as in *pūraṇ pad* (perfect place), *pūraṇ ghar* (perfect house), *pūraṇ Guru* (perfect Master), *pūraṇ gatī* (complete salvation), and so on. *Pūraṇ* or *pūrā* are used extensively for God:

> I have meditated on the perfect *(pūrā)* Lord,
> perfect *(pūrā)* is whose Name.
> By singing the praises of the perfect One *(Pūrā)*,
> Nānak has obtained the perfect *(pūrā)* Master.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 295, MMS*

In the *Upanishads*, *pūrṇa* is used to indicate that *Brahman* remains unaffected by the creation of the universe, since nothing can ever change or deplete the infinite:

That *(Brahman)* is whole *(pūrṇa)*, this (universe) is whole *(pūrṇa)*:
the whole *(pūrṇa)* comes out of the whole *(pūrṇa)*.
Taking the whole *(pūrṇa)* from the whole *(pūrṇa)*,
the whole *(pūrṇa)* itself remains.

Invocation to Īshāvāsya Upanishad

See also: **perfection**.

purush(a) (S/H) *Lit.* being, spirit; used in a variety of contexts in Indian mystical expression, both general and specific. In the *Vedas, purusha* means man, male or, collectively, mankind. In some mystic literature, *purush* is used in reference to God, as in *Sat Purush* (the true Being). It also appears in expressions denoting the beings who rule the heavenly realms, as in *Kāl Purush*.

In the *Sānkhya* school of philosophy, *purusha* is consciousness, *per se*. It is 'being' as opposed to *prakṛiti*, which is primal nature, the primal and subtle blueprint of matter.

In *Vedānta, purusha* is used in the sense of the personal being or animating force within both living creatures and in the higher realms. It is the soul as well as the ruler, deity, lord or focus of consciousness in higher realms. *Purusha* thus refers to *Brahman*, the absolute Reality.

See also: **purusha** (5.2).

Purushottam(a) (S/H), **Purkhotam** (Pu) *Lit.* Supreme *(uttam)* Being *(Purush, Purkh)*; finest Being, highest Being, supreme Spirit; a name of God:

The Lord's slave sings the praise
of the Name of the sublime Person *(Purkhotam*, Supreme Being),
and his poverty and pain are all destroyed.

Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 975, MMS

Together with *Paramātmā, Purushottama* is frequently used in the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā* for the Supreme Being:

O Highest of all Beings *(Purushottama)!*
Creator of all! Lord of all! God of gods!
Ruler of the worlds!
You are known only to Yourself by Yourself alone.

Bhagavad Gītā 10:15; cf. BGT

See also: **akshara**.

qadīm (A/P) *Lit.* eternal; also, in common usage, old, ancient; the converse of *muḥdath* (transitory); descriptive of God who is anterior in existence; who always was before anything else came into being; who is *azal* (without beginning) and *abad* (without end).

Qahhār, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Conqueror, the Defeater (of enemies), the Irresistible, the Wrathful, the Crusher; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh:*

He is the Irresistible *(al-Qahhār),*
(watching) from above over His worshippers;
And He is the Wise,
acquainted with all things.

Qur'ān 6:18, AYA

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**, **asmā' al-qahrīyah**, **qahr** (6.2).

Qayyūm, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Self-Subsistent, the Self-Subsisting, the Self-Existent One; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh:*

Allāh! There is no god but He –
the Living, the Self-Subsisting *(al-Qayyūm),*
Supporter of all.

Qur'ān 2:255, HQSA

Qayyūm implies not only the self-subsistence of God, but also His continual support and maintenance of all that lives. He is the source of life and being to which everything owes its existence.

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

Rabb, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Lord; also, owner. As a name of God, *Rabb* indicates the Lord who cherishes, sustains and brings His creatures *(marbūb)* to maturity. *Rabb* is thus more akin to 'Father' than *Mālik,* which emphasizes His unrelenting power and inviolable will. Yet, just as a father rules over his children, *Rabb* also implies might and glory, though His is a loving power:

Turn back from existence *(hast)* towards nonexistence *(nīstī),*
if you seek the Lord *(Rabb),*
and belong to the Lord *(Rabb).*

Rūmī, Maśnavī II:688, MJR2 p.257

Rabb al-arbāb (Lord of lords) is an allied expression that conveys His supreme glory and loving omnipotence.

See also: **Father**.

Rabb al-'ālamīn (A/P) *Lit.* Lord *(Rabb)* of the worlds *(al-'ālamīn);* the Lord of all creation; the Lord of all the realms of creation; the creator, the sustainer and the evolver of the universe; the power from which all existence springs, and in which it constantly has its being.

Rabb, usually translated as 'Lord', conveys the meaning of cherishing, sustaining and bringing to maturity. The Lord cares for, sustains and cherishes all the realms of the creation:

> Praise be to *Allāh*,
> the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds *(Rabb al-'ālamīn)*.
> *Qur'ān 1:2, HQSA*

See also: **'ālam** (4.1), **al-Rabb**.

Rabb al-'izzah (A), **Rabb-i 'izzat** (P) *Lit.* Lord *(Rabb)* of glory *(al-'izzah);* the Lord of might, the almighty Lord, the all-powerful Lord; He who has everything within His power. *Rabb al-'izzah* conveys both the Lord's glory, honour and power *('izzah)*, as well as His divinity *(rubūbīyah)*. His aid overcomes all obstacles:

> Glory to thy Lord,
> the Lord of honour and power *(Rabb al-'izzah)!*
> (He is free) from what they ascribe (to Him)!
> *Qur'ān 37:180, AYA*

> If any do seek for glory and power –
> To *Allāh* belong all glory and power *(al-'izzah)*.
> To Him mount up (all) words of purity:
> It is He who exalts each deed of righteousness.
> *Qur'ān 35:10, AYA*

See also: **al-Rabb**.

Rādhā Swāmī (H) *Lit.* Lord *(Swāmī)* of the Soul *(Rādhā);* the Supreme Being; the nameless One *(Anāmī);* the unutterable One *(Akah);* the highest Being;

a name used by Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh for the supreme Lord. In Sanskrit, *rādhā* literally means prosperity or success, but the word is more commonly known in India as a girl's name.

In the poetry of Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, *rādhā* is a name given to the soul. The name *Rādhā Swāmī* appears in many of his poems, along with *surat Shabd,* an expression that has been in use since the time of Kabīr and Guru Nānak where *Shabd* is the creative Power and *surat* is the soul. These two expressions imply that the relationship of the soul *(rādhā)* and the Lord *(Swāmī)* is the same as that of the soul *(surat)* and the Word *(Shabd).* The latter expression also hints at the system of *surat Shabd yoga* by which the reunion of the soul with the *Shabd* and with the Lord comes about:

> *Rādhā* is the name of the primal soul *(ādi surat),*
> *Swāmī* is the primal *Shabd (ādi Shabd)* and the true home.
> Hence, take both *surat Shabd* (the soul and the Word)
> and *Rādhā Swāmī* to be the same.
> Just as *surat* (soul) enjoys bliss with the *Shabd,*
> so *Rādhā* stays in the company of *Swāmī.*
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 2:4.1–3, SBP p.8*

And:

> *Rādhā* is the lover,
> and *Swāmī* is the name of the beloved Lord....
> *Rādhā Swāmī* have I used for *surat Shabd.*
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 2:3.2–3, SBP p.8*

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh also describes the highest 'realms' of all, lying within the Godhead, as *sat lok* (true region), *alakh lok* (imperceptible region) and *agam lok* (inaccessible region), each 'ruled' by their respective lord *(purush).* Above these, lies the highest transcendental, divine Essence of the Godhead, "the land of *Rādhā Swāmī*":

> After crossing *sat lok, alakh lok* and *agam lok,*
> and having had the vision *(darshan)* of *Sat Purush,*
> *Alakh Purush* and *Agam Purush,*
> the soul will enter its native land of *Rādhā Swāmī.*
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 1, Sandesh 13–15, SBP p.3*

And:

> *Sat Purush* then spoke to the soul:
> He revealed the secret of *alakh lok,*
> and up there by His own power did He send the soul.

Wondrous is the form of *Alakh Purush.*
Agam Purush, the Lord of all, the soul then beheld.
The wonder seen there no words can tell.
How can I describe the infinite glory of that stage, O brother?
These three lords *(Sat Purush, Alakh Purush* and *Agam Purush),*
and the three stages did the soul behold,
and with these was it united....
Extreme bliss and love reign there:
so proclaims *Rādhā Swāmī.*

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 26:5.12–17, SBP p.229

The name *Rādhā Swāmī* has become the name associated with the line of Masters who succeeded Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh. The term, however, as these Masters themselves have often said, has no particular significance. It is simply another name for God, of which the world already has many, all of which have come into being at some point in time, and which will pass into disuse with the passage of time.

In many places, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes of the Lord as *Rādhā Swāmī,* using the term synonymously with the far older names, *Anāmī* (the Nameless) and *Anāmī Purush* (the nameless Being):

Wondrous indeed is the palace of *Rādhā Swāmī,*
Supremely enchanted, the soul merges
into the nameless Being *(Anāmī Purush).*

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry, Mangalācharaṇ, Chaupaī 6–7, SBP p.2

Rādhā Swāmī – Anāmī Purush – I then beheld,
and in Him I merged.
Infinite, endless and limitless is He,
and that is the Saints' own realm.
Reaching there, all Saints hold their peace,
and so, too, do I.

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry, Bachan 21, Hidāyat Nāmā, SBP p.177

He also describes the Master as *Rādhā Swāmī:*

The Lord of the Soul *(Rādhā Swāmī)* has assumed a human form *(nar rūp)*
to come to the world as a Master,
to initiate souls into the remembrance of God.

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 1:2.1, SBP p.6

And:

Rādhā Swāmī is the name of the *Guru.*

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 18:4.26, SBP p.135

The use of compound names is common in Indian languages, and there is some limited evidence of Rādhāswāmī being used as an ordinary Indian name prior to the time of Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh. In Samuel Beal's translation of Fă Hsiēn's (*d.c.*420 CE) famous record of his fifth-century journey from China to India in search of his Buddhist roots, Fă Hsiēn writes:

> In this city (*i.e.* of Patliputra or Patna), once lived a certain *brāhmaṇ* called Rādhāswāmī (Lo-tai-sz-pi-mi) of large mind and extensive knowledge, and attached to the Great Vehicle (*i.e. Mahāyāna* Buddhism). There was nothing with which he was unacquainted, and he lived apart, occupied in silent meditation. The king of the country honoured and respected him as his religious superior. If he (the king) went to salute him, he did not dare sit down in his (the *brāhmaṇ*'s) presence. If the king, from a feeling of esteem, took him by the hand, the *brāhmaṇ* thoroughly washed himself. For something like fifty years, the whole country looked up to this man, and placed its confidence on him alone. He mightily extended the influence of the law of Buddha, so that the heretics were unable to obtain any advantage at all over the priesthood.
>
> *Fa Hsien, Records of the Western World 27.55, TFH p.862.b3, BRW1 p.65*

However, the Chinese characters phonetically transliterated as Rādhāswāmī can be rendered in other ways, and the characters also vary between texts, providing possibilities such as Artāswāmin, Rādhāsāmī and Rajas Vāmin.[1] It is also worth noting that Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh died at Agra in 1878, and Samuel Beal's translation was published in 1884, so it is not impossible that the name *Rādhā Swāmī* was known to Beal at the time of his translation.

1. See Samuel Beal, *Travels of Fah-Hian and Sun-Yun, Buddhist Pilgrims from China to India, TBP* p.104 (n.2); James Legge, *Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms, RBK* p.78 (n.2); Thomas Watters, "Fa-Hsien and His English Translators", in *The China Review,* 1879–1880; Kazutoshi Nakagawa, *Hokken den yakuchû kaisetsu, HYK* p.309 (n.12).

Rādhā Swāmī dhām, Rādhā Swāmī pad (H/Pu) *Lit.* abode *(dhām),* place or realm *(pad)* of the Lord *(Swāmī)* of the Soul *(Rādhā);* the realm of the nameless, formless, all-embracing One; the true or imperishable region; names given by Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh to the highest 'part' or 'aspect' of the Godhead:

It should be known that *Rādhā Swāmī pad* is the highest of all. This is also the name of the Supreme Being, the real Lord God. Two stages below this is the region of *Sat Nām*. The Saints have called it by various names, such as *sat lok, sach khaṇḍ, sār Shabd, sat Shabd, Sat Nām* and *Sat Purush*....

The *Rādhā Swāmī pad* is also called *akah* (unspoken, indescribable) or *anāmī* (nameless), as this region is immeasurable, endless and without beginning. It is That from which all other regions were created or manifested. This is the true *lā-makān* (without any location) and *lā-maqām* (which cannot even be termed a region).

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Prose 1:4, SB p.5

Infinite is the *Rādhā Swāmī dhām*.
The supremely generous *Satguru*
has blessed me with (its vision).

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 19:17.9, SBP p.152

And:

I have fathomed the depths
of the imperceptible, inaccessible realm.
There, drinking the essence of the wondrous nectar of the Name,
the soul advanced forward,
and merged into the *Rādhā Swāmī dhām*.

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 6:15.15–16, SBP p.63

See also: **Rādhā Swāmī**.

radla (He) An acronym of *reisha d'lo ishyada* (the beginning that is not known); a Kabbalist term used by the *ḤaBaD Ḥasidim* for the *Ayn-Sof* (the Godhead), to indicate the deepest and innermost level of the essence of God, which is entirely unknowable through the intellect.

See also: **ḤaBaD** (▸2).

Rafīq, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Friend, the Companion, the Guide; an epithet of God. Rūmī speaks of the

holy Attributes of God – how good a Friend *(Rafīq)* is He!

Rūmī, Maśnavī 1:1433, MJR2 p.79

And he pleads:

> Put into our heart subtle words
> which may move You to mercy, O Friend *(ay Rafīq).*
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:691; cf. MJR2 p.257*

According to tradition, the last words uttered by the Prophet Muḥammad were, *"Allāhumma al-Rafīqa al-A'lá."*[1] Rūmī, however, using the Persian form of the famous phrase, says that this was what the Prophet would repeat "every night till daybreak":

> From this longing for divine guidance,
> he (Muḥammad) was crying, every night till daybreak,
> "O most high Companion on the Way *(Rafīq-i rāh-i A'lá)!*"
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:2588, MJR4 p.415*

Rūmī means that Muḥammad remembered God all night in his meditation.

See also: **Dūst**.

1. *Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 5:59.740, in *MJR8* p.190.

raḥamim (He) *Lit.* compassion, divine love, tender mercies; a quality of God.

See also: **Dayāl, al-Raḥīm, al-Raḥmān**.

Raḥīm, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Merciful, the Mercy-Giving, the Compassionate; one of the ninety-nine names of *Allāh,* according to His qualities of mercy and forgiveness; commonly used in the epithet, *al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* (the Compassionate, the Mercy-Giving). Theologians and scholars have differentiated between *al-Raḥmān* and *al-Raḥīm* in various ways. Generally, *al-Raḥmān* (the Compassionate) is understood to refer to God's essential nature, *al-Raḥīm* (the Merciful, the Mercy-Giving) to the expression of that nature in the actual bestowal of mercy on His creation:

> He is *Allāh:*
> there is no god *(ilāha)* but He.
> He is the Knower of the Unseen and the Seen;
> He is the Compassionate *(al-Raḥmān),* the Merciful *(al-Raḥīm).*
>
> *Qur'ān 59:22*

The distinction between the two is used to make sense of a line in the *Qur'ān*, *"kāna bi-al-mu'minīna Raḥīman,"* translated as "He is compassionate and beneficent (only) to believers."[1] *Raḥīm* is explained as the current of mercy received by those who are attuned to His will and do their best to act according to His wishes, desiring to draw closer to Him. These are the true "believers". *Raḥmān* is the mercy and beneficence, bounty and grace that God, by virtue of His own intrinsic nature, showers upon all creation, the good and the evil, the spiritually inclined and the worldly, alike.

In practice, the two terms are both found translated as the Merciful and the Compassionate. God is also called *Arḥam al-Rāḥimīn* (the Most Merciful of the Merciful Ones).[2]

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**, **Dayāl**, **raḥamim**, **al-Raḥmān**, **raḥum**.

1. *Qur'ān* 33:43.
2. *e.g. Qur'ān* 12:64.

Raḥmān, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Compassionate, the Merciful, the Beneficent, the Most Gracious; He who is merciful or compassionate of His own nature; one of the ninety-nine names of *Allāh;* a Muslim designation of the Supreme Being, according to His own essential nature of mercy and forgiveness. After *Allāh, al-Raḥmān* is the most commonly used name of God in the Islamic world, being used in the *Qur'ān* as the equivalent of *Allāh:*

> Call upon *Allāh* or call upon *al-Raḥmān:*
> by whatever name you call upon Him, (it is well);
> For to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names.
>
> *Qur'ān 17:110; cf. AYA*

The expression, "God, Most Gracious *(al-Raḥmān)*, Most Merciful *(al-Raḥīm)*" also appears several times in the *Qur'ān*.[1] He is regarded as the All-Merciful and the Lord of Mercy. As the *Qur'ān* states: *"wa-raḥmatī wasi'at kulli shay'in"* – "My mercy covers everything."[2]

In the *Qur'ān,* God tells Muḥammad that His greatest mercy is in guiding a seeker to the right path, for only those will understand whom He so guides:

> And We have put a bar in front of them,
> and a bar behind them;
> And further, We have covered them up,
> so that they cannot see.

The same is it to them
  whether you admonish them
  or you do not admonish them:
They will not believe.

You can but admonish such a one as follows the message,
  and fears the (Lord) Most Gracious *(al-Raḥmān)*, unseen:
Give such a one, therefore, good tidings of forgiveness
  and a reward most generous.

Qur'ān 36:9–11; cf. AYA

The *Qur'ān* also speaks of *al-Raḥmān* governing all creation from His divine throne:

Him who created the earth and the high heavens;
The All-Compassionate *(al-Raḥmān)* sat Himself upon the throne;
To Him belongs all that is in the heaven and the earth,
  and all that is between them,
  and all that is underneath the soil.

Qur'ān 20:4–6, KI

There is an oft-repeated *ḥadīth*, "When God ordained the creation, He wrote in His Book which is with Him above the throne *('arsh)*, 'Verily, my mercy prevailed over my wrath.'"[3] From man's point of view, divine 'wrath' is separation from Him. His mercy is His forgiveness, and His drawing of the soul back to Himself.

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**, **Dayāl**, **raḥamim**, **Raḥmah** (▸2), **al-Raḥmān**, **raḥum**.

1. *e.g. Qur'ān* 2:163, 41:2, 59:22.
2. *Qur'ān* 7:156.
3. *Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 4:54.416, *KAQ* 24, in *MJR7* p.168; *cf.* Rūmī, *Maśnavī* I:2672, *MJR2* p.144.

raḥum (He) *Lit.* compassionate; merciful; a quality of God.

See also: **Dayāl**, **al-Raḥīm**, **al-Raḥmān**.

Rām(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* dark-coloured; pleasing, charming, delightful, beautiful; an Indian name for God, derived from the allegorical and epic myth, the

Rāmāyaṇa, whose central character Rāmachandra symbolizes the Lord. Although Vaishnavites consider *Rāma* to be the seventh incarnation of *Vishṇu*, the name is commonly used, in the Hindu tradition as a whole, for the Supreme Being. Likewise, in the *Ādi Granth, Rām* is used as a name of God. The name appears frequently in Indian mystic and religious literature:

> Truly, *Rāma* is identical with the Supreme Being *(Paramapurusha)*.
>
> *Rāma Uttara Tāpinīya Upanishad 41, HTU p.347*

> Though speaking of *Rām*, the whole world is lost:
> that, then, could not be the true *Rām*.
> He who is merciful to all regardless of their actions,
> good or bad, is the true Lord.
>
> *Ravidās, Vāṇī 10:2–3, SGRV p.72*

Words and names can refer to different things, depending upon the meaning of who is using them. In one of his poems, Kabīr identifies four ways in which *Rām* is used:

> There is a *Rām* known as Dasharatha's son.
> Another *Rām* is one who resides in all.
> There is a third *Rām*, the creator of all.
> There is then the absolute *Rām*, apart from all.
>
> *Kabīr, Samagra, Sākhī 124:14, KSSY p.462*

The first is the character in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the second is the individual mind, the third is the universal mind or *Brahm*, and the fourth is the supreme Lord. The meaning depends on the context in which the term is used.

As a name of God, *Rām* commonly implies a sense of the Divine as all-pervasive. Thus, Kabīr writes ecstatically of *Rām Rāi* (*lit.* God the King) as the omnipresent divine Majesty and sovereign Lord:

> I am in all,
> all that is, is I.
> The different forms in existence
> are my myriad manifestations;
> Yet I am apart from all.
>
> Call me *Kabīr*,
> call me *Rām Rāi*:
> It is all the same.
>
> *Kabīr, Granthāvalī, Pad 50, KG p.81; cf. KWGN p.464*

Rashīd, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Intelligent, the Wise, the Righteous; the Righteous Teacher; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh:*

> *Allāh* is the Righteous Teacher who ordains righteousness for all creatures. In His wisdom He leads all matters to their finality in a perfect way and order. He is the ultimate teacher who leads one to the straight path and salvation. He is a perfect teacher who never fails in His wisdom or in His actions. Everything done by Him has a clear and beneficial purpose. His teaching is so effective that it becomes the nature of everything in the universe that follows His will....
>
> *'Abd al-Rashīd* is the Righteous One who has arrived at the right path that leads to *Allāh*'s will and His Messenger's orders. This is the station of the *Murshid,* the great teacher who has come to know, to find and to become close to *Allāh.* As he is on the straight path, he also has the licence to lead others on the straight path.
>
> *Shaykh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti, The Most Beautiful Names, MBN pp.131–33*

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

Ratu (Av) *Lit.* Lord *(U)* of Truth *(Rita);* the Lord of Righteousness. In Zoroastrian theology, *Ahurā Mazdā* and *Ratu* represent the two aspects of the Godhead, *Ahurā Mazdā* is the absolute, unmanifested Lord, while *Ratu* refers to the manifested Lord. *Ratu* is also used to refer to the Saviour or Prophet as a manifestation of the supreme Lord.

See also: **Ahurā Mazdā**, **Ratu** (▸2).

rock (He. *sela', ẓur*) A simile used for God by the biblical prophets and mystics, implying His strength, permanence and dependability:

> The Lord lives; and blessed is my rock *(ẓur);*
> And exalted is the God of the rock *(ẓur)* of my salvation.
>
> *2 Samuel 22:47, KB*

And:

> Who can detect his own failings?
> Wash out my hidden faults,
>   and from pride preserve Your servant:
> Never let it dominate me.
> So shall I be above reproach,
>   free from grave sin.

May the words of my mouth always find favour,
and the whispering of my heart,
in Your presence, *Yahweh,*
my rock *(ẓur),* my Redeemer!

Psalm 19:12–14, JB

Sela' (rock) is used in a similar manner, as in expressions such as "God, my rock *(sela')*".[1]

1. *Psalm* 42:10, *JCL.*

ro'eh (He) *Lit.* shepherd, from a Hebrew verb meaning to pasture, to graze, to tend; a common biblical epithet of God as the protector of the soul and the one who provides spiritual nourishment in the divine pastures of the higher realms. As portrayed in the twenty-third psalm, oriental shepherds lead their flocks:

The Lord is my shepherd *(ro'eh);* I shall not want.
He makes me to lie down in green pastures:
he leads me beside the still waters.
He restores my soul:
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
for His Name's sake.

Psalm 23:1–3, KB

Ro'eh is probably related to the word *reaḥ,* meaning 'friend' or 'companion', as an extension of the meaning of 'shepherd'.[1] The Lord is the ultimate friend of mankind in the sense that the essence of the soul is the same as that of God. Hence, they cannot be separated, even at the time of death.

See also: **Shepherd**.

1. "Ro'eh", in *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language, CEDH.*

rosh ha-Karmel (He) *Lit.* peak *(rosh)* of Mount Carmel *(ha-Karmel).*

See **Mount Carmel**.

rū (P) *Lit.* face, visage or countenance; mystically, the face of God; God Himself; also, the form of the *Pīr* or *Murshid* (Master), either physically or, often, spiritually; equivalent to the Arabic *wajh.*

See also: **countenance of God**, **rū** (▸2), **wajh**.

Rūḥ al-A'ẓam, al- (A), **Rūḥ-i A'ẓam** (P) *Lit.* the Greatest *(A'ẓam)* Spirit *(Rūḥ)*; the Most Exalted Spirit; the First Entification *(al-Ta'ayyun al-Awwal)* that takes place within the Absolute *(al-Dhāt)*; the eternal realm from which the one Lord 'speaks' the divine Command "Be!", bringing the creation into existence; a term sometimes equated with *al-Ḥaqīqah al-Muḥammadīyah* (the Reality of Muḥammad).

Some Sufi commentators equate *al-Rūḥ al-A'ẓam*, the level of Oneness out of which the Creative Word emanates, with the spirit of the primordial and archetypal man, Adam. In other words, the spiritual heritage of human beings is an essential oneness with *al-Rūḥ al-A'ẓam*. Ibn 'Arabī equates *al-Rūḥ al-A'ẓam* with that point in the spiritual journey beyond which the angel Gabriel could not go, the level beyond which the knowledge of the angels does not extend.[1] It is said that Gabriel led the Prophet until they came "within two bow lengths of the Presence", and at the *Sidrah* tree he said he could go no further; the Prophet went on alone.

Al-Rūḥ al-A'ẓam is the same as the power that is also termed, metaphorically, the Superior Fathers *(Ābā' al-'Ulwīyah)*. It is through *al-Rūḥ al-A'ẓam* that *al-'Aql al-Awwal* (First Intelligence, First Wisdom, the creative Power) is brought into being: it is through this Greatest Spirit that the blessing *(fayḍ)* of the divine Essence *(al-Dhāt)* is bestowed upon the creative Power:

> When this Spirit *(al-Rūḥ al-A'ẓam)* summons a blessing *(fayḍ)* from the Source, the First Intelligence (the creative Power) becomes worthy of receiving it, and becomes a suitable ground for that blessing to be expounded....
>
> Since a successor must carry qualities of the predecessor, therefore out of the Lord's divine grace and unlimited generosity, *al-Rūḥ al-A'ẓam* is garbed with all the blessings and grace, all the names and attributes of glory and beauty, and is given a very high position on the throne of the creation.
>
> *'Izz al-Dīn Maḥmūd Qāshānī, Miṣbāḥ al-Hidāyah wa-Miftāḥ al-Kifāyah, MHK p.94, in FLI p.429*

Thus, the *rūḥ* within man is the offspring of *al-Rūḥ al-A'ẓam*, which is created directly and without intermediary by the supreme Essence:

> Know that in reality the human soul is *al-Rūḥ al-A'ẓam*, and is the manifestation of God's Essence. Therefore, no one but God can understand its depth.
>
> *Dā'ūd al-Qayṣarī, Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam, SFH p.74, in FLI pp.430–31*

Rūḥ-i A'ẓam is the First Wisdom and the White Pearl; …
Rūḥ-i A'ẓam is all qualities and Essence;
Rūḥ-i A'ẓam is King of the whole universe;
Rūḥ-i A'ẓam is the face of God's Name,
  and Chamberlain of the court of that King.

Shāh Ni'mat Allāh Valī, in FLI p.431

1. Ibn 'Arabī, *Tafsīr*, in *MJR7* p.86.

Saba'oth See **Yahweh Ẓeva'ot**.

Ṣabūr, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Patient One, the Forbearing; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh*. In Islam, as in Sufism and Middle Eastern culture in general, the virtue of patience is accorded a very high status. Patience implies the ability to let time play its own part, to be unruffled by the vicissitudes of the unfolding events. God is, indeed, the most Patient One, for He has created time.

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

sachchā Pātshāh, **sachchā Pātsāh** (Pu) *Lit.* true *(sachchā)* King *(Pātshāh)*, true Monarch or Emperor; metaphorically, the Lord or Master; an epithet of mixed Persian *(Pād Shāh)* and Indian *(sachchā)* language origin:

The bliss of the Name is as houses and mansions,
  and Thy favouring glance is as family for me.
That is the Command *(Hukam)* which pleases Thee:
  to say more is greatly beyond reach.
Nānak, the true King *(sachchā Pātsāh)* takes decision
  without seeking other's counsel.

Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 16–17, MMS

My friend is the true Monarch *(sachchā Pātsāh)*:
He is the King over the heads of kings,
  sitting by whose side one looks beauteous,
  and who is the support of all.

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1426, MMS

From *sachchā Pātshāh* comes the allied Punjabi expression, *sachchī pātshāhī*, meaning kingship, dominion or ministry of truth, and implying eternity, the kingdom of the true Lord, as opposed to the ever changing creation, which

is the dominion of the negative power. The expression appears in the *Ādi Granth* as *sachchī pātsāhī:*

> True is His throne, and true His sovereignty *(sachchī pātsāhī),*
> true is the treasure of the true Banker.
> God Himself is true, and all true is what He has established:
> the true order of the true One prevails everywhere.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1073, MMS*

The perfect Saints belong to the realm of eternity, only coming to this world to instruct souls in devotion to God. They, too, are said to exercise authority over a kingdom of truth:

> Both above birth and death are the philanthropic persons (*i.e.* Saints)
> who come to do good to others.
> They give the gift of spiritual life,
> apply men to divine devotion, and make men meet with God.
> True is their order, true their empire *(sachchī pātsāhī),*
> and with the true Lord, they are imbued.
> True is their happiness and true their praise:
> they know Him to whom they belong.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 749, MMS*

> The throne *(takht)* of the world is false, O Bāhū!
> It is in spiritual poverty
> that true sovereignty *(sachchī pātsāhī)* resides.
>
> *Sulṭān Bāhū, Bait 68, SBU p.335; cf. SBE (65) pp.274–75*

See also: **Pād Shāh**.

sach khaṇḍ (H/Pu) *Lit.* true or real *(sach)* region *(khaṇḍ);* the true realm, the realm of truth; the region of reality; the eternal realm whose governing lord or ruler has been called *Sat Purush* (true Lord) or *Sat Nām* (true Name) by a number of Indian mystics; the first of the truly eternal or imperishable, all-embracing realms reached by the soul on its ascent, free from change, the ultimate abode of absolute bliss, beyond the extent of dissolution *(pralaya)* and grand dissolution *(mahā pralaya).*

The 'ruler' of *sach khaṇḍ (Sat Purush)* is the ultimate source of all knowledge, energy and bliss or eternal truth. For better understanding at the human intellectual level only, *sach khaṇḍ* and its ruler are generally described as if distinct. In reality, in the oneness of God, they are not different from each other. *Sach khaṇḍ* is the final destination of the soul; the realization of *Sat Purush* is its ultimate aim. The destination and the aim being one, the mystic

significance or import is the same – the eternal home and the eternal Being wedded to each other in eternal emancipation. Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh describes the manifestation of *sach khaṇḍ* as an aspect of eternity:

> His will surged forth:
> A huge and thunderous Sound arose,
> and the true Name – the true Word *(sat Shabd)* – rang out.
> With this Sound He created the true realm *(sach khaṇḍ),*
> and by this Sound is that sphere encompassed.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 11:1.80–81, SBP p.101*

Indian mystics have likened the Sound of this realm to that of the Indian musical instrument, the *vīṇā.*[1] Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes of this region using images and metaphors:

> In the fifth region is the fort
> with the Emperor's throne.
> Know him to be the true Emperor.
> The soul advances and sees an open lawn *(maidān)* –
> a wondrous city, with marvellous squares,
> abounding with golden palaces set amidst pools of nectar,
> and girdled by moats filled with ambrosia.
> It has moonlit squares and magnificent islands,
> and the beauty of the *haṃsas* (*lit.* swans, pure souls)
> living there is incomprehensible;
> The brilliance of each one
> equals the combined light of sixteen suns and moons.
>
> The soul then passes on up to the real entrance.
> The watchers by the gates are the *haṃsas.*
> Here the souls of that region ask your soul:
> "How have you managed to reach this region?"
> As a newcomer, you reply:
> "I came across a Saint
> and he gave me knowledge of this region."
>
> Saying this, your soul then pushes on
> to delight in the *darshan* (vision) of *Sat Nām,*
> and is enraptured with exceedingly great joy.
> A voice then emanates from within the lotus, saying:
> "Who are you, and what purpose or object brings you here?"
> You answer, "I met the true Master *(Satguru)*
> and he gave me the secret.

Through his kindness I now have the privilege of your *darshan*."
From this *darshan* the soul derives immense pleasure.

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 26:5.1–12, SBP p.229

He also lays down certain conditions for reaching this region:

Through the inner practice of *surat Shabd* (*lit.* soul + Word)
hold on to the path of the five Sounds.
Then, step by step, climb the ladder of *Shabd,*
and reach *sach khaṇḍ,* the region of *Sat Nām.*

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 8:17.22–23, SBP p.86

And:

Give up ritual, superstition and hypocrisy,
and break through the barrier of *brahmāṇḍ.*
When the attention is stabilized within,
the soul reaches the region of truth *(sat lok),*
the true realm *(sach khaṇḍ).*

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 1:1.43–44, SBP p.6

Likewise, Guru Nānak speaks of the wonders of eternity using the same term:

In the realm of truth *(sach khaṇḍ)*
abides the formless Lord (*Nirankār,* the Formless)
God beholds the creation which He has created,
and renders them happy when He casts upon the beings
His merciful glance.
In that realm, there are continents (*khaṇḍ,* regions),
worlds (*maṇḍal,* spheres),
solar systems (*warbhaṇḍ, i.e. brahmaṇḍ,* the universe);
If someone tries to describe them,
then know that there is no limit or bound of them.
There are universes upon universes, and creations over creations:
as is the Master's mandate, so are their functions.
The Lord beholds His creation and feels happy by contemplating over it.
O Nānak, to describe (the realm of truth) is hard like iron.

Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 8, MMS

See also: **khaṇḍ** (4.1), **sat desh**, **vīṇā** (3.2).

1. *e.g.* Bhīkhā, *Bānī* 4:1–2, *BSB* p.19; Guru Arjun, *Ādi Granth* 622; Guru Nānak, *Ādi Granth* 767; Kabīr, *Shabdāvalī* 1, *Bhed Bānī* 22:25, *KSS1* p.67;

Nāmdev, *Ādi Granth* 972; Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, *Sār Bachan Poetry* 3:2.101, *SBP* p.18.

Sāhib (A/H/Pu) *Lit.* lord, master; honourable sir; a term of respect used in India for any great man, governor, chief, owner, landlord, gentleman, holy man, or even a comrade or friend. *Sāhib* has also been used extensively in mystic literature as an epithet of the Lord:

> I have full faith in the might of my Lord *(Sāhib):*
> who, then, can dare oppose me?
>
> *Dariyā Sāhib, Shabd 99, DG1 p.65*

And:

> When the true Lord *(Sāhib)* stands by your head for protection,
> nothing can ever harm you.
>
> *Dādū, Bānī 1, Sūrā Tan 24:79, DDB1 p.202*

> Paltū sleeps carefree,
> for the Lord *(Sāhib)* Himself is his watchman.
> The Lord *(Sāhib)* being his watchman,
> Paltū enjoys blissful sleep.
> Stretched full length, he sleeps relaxed:
> on seeing him, his enemies flee.
> When the Lord Himself stands guard,
> who can harm a hair on his head?
>
> *Paltū, Bānī 1, Kuṇḍalī 155:1–3, PSB1 p.66*

See also: **Sāhib** (▸2).

ṣaḥrā-yi Nīstī (P) *Lit.* desert *(ṣaḥrā')* of Nonexistence *(Nīstī);* a Sufi term for the vast expanse of eternity, beyond the existence of the creation; also called *ṣaḥrā-yi 'Adam* and *dasht-i 'Adam.*

See also: **dasht-i 'Adam**.

ṣaḥrā-yi qudsī (P) *Lit.* divine *(qudsī)* desert *(ṣaḥrā');* divine field, holy desert, divine expanse; the realm of divinity:

> In *Ṣūfī* language, *ṣaḥrā-yi quds* is a metaphor to denote *'ālam-i lāhūt* (realm of divinity).
>
> *Muḥammad ibn-i Muḥammad-i Dārābī, Laṭīfah-'i Ghaybī, in FNI3 p.184*

Sāīn (H/Pu) *Lit.* husband, beloved, master, lord; used as a name of endearment for God and the spiritual Master:

Without the Beloved *(Sāīn)*, the heart aches.
There is neither peace by day,
nor sleep by night.
Before whom shall I weep?
To whom shall I tell my pain?
In the depths of the night and in the early hours,
without the Beloved *(Sāīn)*,
longing intensely (for Him),
I get no sleep.

Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 1, Shabd 18:1–2, KSS1 p.12

And:

The Lord is awake, and the soul is asleep:
how, then, can union be attained?
They share the same bed, yet do not meet:
that is why union was not achieved.
The company of the Beloved *(Sāīn)* was not obtained,
and life was lost in sleep.

Dādū, Bānī 2, Rāg Gaurī 41:1–3, DDB2 p.13

Sajjan (Pu), **Sājan** (H) *Lit.* true *(sat)* man or person *(jan);* one who is well born, of good qualities, noble, virtuous; hence, lover, husband; dear and beloved friend; metaphorically, the divine Beloved, the Lord or Master:

I have been searching for my Friend *(Sajjan)*,
but my Friend *(Sajjan)* is with me.
O slave Nānak, the invisible Lord is seen not:
the supreme *Guru* alone does help us to see Him.

Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 1318, MMS

See also: **Sajjan** (▸2).

Salām, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Peace; hence, the peaceful One, the Source of Peace; the Saviour; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh*. *Salām* is a traditional greeting whose literal meaning is peace, including the connotations of being safe and sound, unharmed and secure, blameless or faultless, and certain, established or clearly proven. It is said in the *Qur'ān* that when a soul arrives in paradise the inhabitants there welcome the newcomer with

"*Salām*". God is He who brings the seeker to this peace and security, freeing him from both faults and uncertainty. He is the "Source of Peace":

> He is *Allāh:*
> there is no god *(ilāha)* but He.
> He is the Sovereign, the Holy One,
> the Source of Peace *(al-Salām).*
>
> *Qur'ān 59:23*

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**.

Ṣamad, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Eternal, the Everlasting; the eternal One; the eternal Absolute; "the eternally Besought of all";[1] one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh. Al-Ṣamad* has more connotations than the Eternal, and is difficult to translate by just one word. He is the eternal Absolute; He is dependent on no other, yet all other beings and things are dependent on Him; He is sought after by all, yet has no need of any other; He is self-existent, unique, unconditioned and free from all the temporal processes of coming into being:

> Say: "He is *Allāh,* the One and Only;
> *Allāh,* the Eternal Absolute *(al-Ṣamad).*
> He begets not, nor is He begotten;
> And there is none like unto Him."
>
> *Qur'ān 112:1–4; cf. AYA*

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná, eternal realm, sarmad**.

1. *Qur'ān* 112:1, *MGK.*

sanātana Purush(a) (S/H) *Lit.* primeval *(sanātana)* Being *(Purusha);* the ancient Being, the eternal Being. *Sanātana* also implies immemorial, perpetual, continuing, constant, permanent, firm, fixed, settled, traditional. Arjuna praises Kṛishṇa in the *Bhagavad Gītā:*

> In my understanding, You are the supreme imperishable One,
> the essence of all knowledge;
> You are the ultimate refuge of the universe;
> You are the perennial guardian of the eternal Law *(Dharma);*
> You are the ancient Being *(sanātana Purusha).*
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 11:18*

sarmad, sarmadī (A/P) *Lit.* eternal, everlasting; of endless duration; without beginning or end; a quality of God or the absolute Reality. *Sarmad* and *sarmadī* are both adjectives; *sarmadī* is also a noun, meaning eternity or everlastingness. *Sarmad* is also the name of a seventeenth-century Saint who was put to death by the Mughul emperor, Aurangzeb.

sarvajña (S/H) *Lit.* all- *(sarva)* knowing *(jña),* all-wise; omniscient; descriptive of the supreme Reality or God:

> He who is all-knowing and all-wise *(sarvajña),*
> whose glory is in the world –
> He is the Self *(Ātman),*
> dwelling in the space of the divine city of *Brahman.*
>
> *Muṇḍaka Upanishad 2:2.7*

The term is also used as an epithet of the Hindu deity *Shiva.*

sarvashaktimān (H) *Lit.* all- *(sarva)* powerful *(shaktimān);* omnipotent, almighty; descriptive of God.

sarvātman, sarvātmā (S/H) *Lit.* universal *(sarva)* soul or self *(ātman, ātmā);* the supreme or universal Spirit. In the *Upanishads, Brahman* is said to be the ultimate Reality, the inmost Essence or the underlying Truth, Self or Soul within everything. *Sarvātman* thus refers to the all-pervading and omnipresent Reality:

> I have realized the unaging ancient One,
> the Self in all *(sarvātman),* all-pervading, omnipresent;
> The wise declare Him to be birthless,
> the expounders of *Brahman* to be eternal.
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 3:21*

And:

> He is the supreme *Brahman,* the Self in all *(sarvātmā),*
> the essential foundation of this world,
> subtler than the subtle, eternal:
> That thou art; thou art That.
>
> *Kaivalya Upanishad 16, HTU p.129*

sarvavyāpak(a), **sarvavyāpi(n)** (S/H) *Lit.* all- *(sarva)* pervading *(vyāpaka);* omnipresent; universal; thus, *sarvavyāpi(n),* one who is all-pervading, who pervades all things; descriptive of the Supreme Being. According to mystics, there is nothing but the Lord. If there was anything other than Him, then He would not be supreme. He has projected His creation and pervades every part of it through His creative Power. His constant presence and power is required for its continued existence. When a person is struck by the immensity, wonder and beauty of nature, this is a reflection and acknowledgement of the presence of the Divine, both within and without. God is not a person but a power or Reality. The *Upanishads* have spoken of this eternal truth:

> As oil (is hidden) in sesame seeds, butter in milk,
> water in (dry) river beds, and fire in wood –
> So is the (supreme) Self realized within the self *(ātmā)*
> by one who seeks It by truth and austerity.
> The Self that is all-pervading *(sarvavyāpin),*
> like butter in milk,
> and is the source of Self-knowledge and austerity –
> That is the *Brahman* taught by the *Upanishad.*
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 1:15–16*

And:

> Dwelling in the secret heart of all beings,
> the Lord *(Bhagavān)* is all-pervading *(sarvavyāpi).*
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 3:11*

Later Indian Saints have said the same:

> Just as a wave exists in water,
> yet consists of nothing but water,
> so too does He exist within every being.
> God is all-pervading *(sarvavyāpak),* says Ravidās.
>
> *Ravidās, Vāṇī 169:4–5, SGRV p.136*

And:

> The Lord is uniformly all-pervading *(sarvatra vyāpaka):*
> but He only reveals Himself by love.
>
> *Tulsīdās, Rām Charit Mānas 1:184.3, RCM p.194*

sat desh, sat des, sat dhām, sat lok, sat pad (H/Pu), **satyalok(a)** (S/H) *Lit.* true *(sat)* country *(desh),* abode or dwelling *(dhām),* region *(lok),* place or state *(pad);* terms for the true realm, the real region, the eternal region, the region of truth or ultimate reality, the real or abiding country; hence, the supreme heaven of all heavens, the kingdom of heaven; the region of eternal and everlasting life. Specifically, the fifth spiritual region or plane in the descriptive system of many Indian Saints, presided over by the supreme Lord, *Sat Purush.* In Indian mythology, *satyaloka* is the highest of the seven heavens, also called *Brahmaloka.*

According to Indian mystics, this realm, which is only called a 'realm' or 'region' for lack of a better word, is the source of the *Shabd,* the Creative Word of God. It is the plane of supreme Consciousness, Being or Reality. From here, the light, life, love and power of the supreme One flow outward and downward (metaphorically speaking) to permeate and sustain all the worlds below. The love and energy of this region permeate and interpenetrate everything in the regions below, so much so that those who truly understand this highest reality say that *sat desh* is present everywhere and within all souls, here and now.

In this highest heavenly region, there is only pure spirit, unmixed with any sort of mind or matter. It is the region of universal Spirit, and there, in the purest spiritual state, the soul is at home and in its native element, ever sustained by the waves of life, love and power that emanate from the supreme Creator. This region is the true home of the soul, an epithet often applied to it by mystics. It is the soul's own natural dwelling place where at last it feels completely in its own element.

Sat desh is an infinite ocean of Spirit. It is home to an infinite number of pure spiritual beings or souls, merged utterly in the beauty and majesty of God, who know neither death, sorrow, nor imperfection. Among them are many who have finished all their earthly lives and have returned to their spiritual home with the aid of a perfect Master, for all Saints and perfect Masters have access to this realm and guide souls to this abode. When the soul reaches *sat desh,* it no longer has an existence separate from the supreme Creator. From 'becoming' – a dynamic state – it has reached 'being' – a state of ultimate peace, tranquillity and oneness with its Creator or Father.

According to the mystics, none of the inner regions, let alone this high and all-inclusive realm, can be described with any degree of accuracy, for there are no thought forms or words in human language that can express their wonders and their beauty. Human beings are too limited in comprehension.

Indian mystics have sometimes described the creation as consisting of four parts. Three – *piṇḍa, aṇḍa* and *brahmāṇḍa* – are subject to periodic dissolution, while *sat desh* alone is eternal. This grand, eternal division is immeasurably vast, so illimitable in extent that no sort of understanding of its size can be conveyed to human intelligence. All that the mystics can say of it is that it is limitless. At the same time, its light is so brilliant that the sun of

this world, even if it were a thousand times brighter, would appear as no more than a tiny dark spot.

An attempt to depict its extent can be made by comparing it with the physical universe, the lower material part of which can be seen by the world's astronomers. This alone contains countless billions of stars and galaxies, each galaxy being millions of light years distant from any other. Some astronomers believe that there may be as many stars in the universe as there are grains of sand on the beaches of the world. The sun of planet earth is merely one of these stars. Yet if this entire vast physical universe were placed in *sat desh,* it would appear to be no more than a drop in an infinite ocean.

The higher mental and spiritual worlds are often spoken of as planes, but the idea of horizontal planes one above the other, indicating an existence governed by time, space and causation, does not give a true picture. Sometimes, the physical universe, the lowest division, is envisaged as a sphere, with the higher worlds conceived as increasingly larger and more refined spheres surrounding it on all sides and interpenetrating it. But, in fact, finite words cannot convey the immensity of the divine creative process.

Some descriptions of *sat desh* speak of it as the fifth region, above which lie three further aspects or realms of the Godhead. Others call the entire realm of the Godhead, *sat desh,* within which there are four 'subdivisions', each having its own characteristics and its own Lord or Governor. But the differences between these subdivisions are very slight. From above downward they are named: *Anāmī* (the Nameless) or *Rādhā Swāmī dhām, agam lok* (inaccessible place), *alakh lok* (imperceptible place) and, lastly, *sach khaṇḍ* (true country) or *sat lok* (true region).

The light of all four of these regions is so intense that it is impossible for a human mind to gain an understanding of it. It cannot be described. Mystics have said that it is like a mute person trying to describe the taste of honey, or a person in love attempting to communicate the love they feel for their beloved. Kabīr simply advises the soul to meditate, to open the inner eye, and to reach *sat lok:*

> Meditate and open the eye of your soul,
> for this is the essence of the absolute abode....
> O pure soul (*haṃsa, lit.* swan), take up your dwelling
> in the eternal realm *(sat lok),*
> where the Name *(Nām)* is the sustenance.
>
> *Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 2, Shabd 6:10, KSS2 p.93*

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh says that it is through the help of the Master that the soul traverses the regions of creation, passes through the great void *(mahā sunn)* and the region on the threshold of eternity *(bhanwar guphā),* and enters *sat pad:*

> With the support of the true Master,
> it (the soul) entered *mahā sunn*.
> Flying high into *bhanwar guphā*,
> the treasury of *Shabd* was opened.
> With this sustenance,
> it reached the true state *(sat pad)*.
> Thus was audience gained
> in the royal court of the imperceptible One.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 34:11.7–8, SBP p.289*

The practice that takes the soul to *sat dhām* is that of the mystic Name:

> Through the true Name,
> see the ultimate true abode *(sat dhām)*,
> reach the imperceptible, unfathomable stage.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 6:11.10, SBP p.59*

Summarizing his statements regarding this region, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh concludes by saying simply that it is all Love:

> What beauty and glory! How can I describe them!
> There is nothing here to convey the idea....
> Extreme bliss and love reign there.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 26:5.15, 17, SBP p.229*

See also: **desh**, **dhām**, **loka**, **pad**, **sach khaṇḍ**.

Sat Nām (H/Pu) *Lit.* true *(sat)* Name *(Nām)* of God; the true or mystic Word of God; also, an appellation of the lord of the fifth spiritual region, the eternal home of the soul, according to the descriptions of some Indian mystics; the true spiritual Father of the soul.

See also: **Sat Nām** (3.1).

Sat Nām Kartā Purakh (Pu) *Lit.* True *(Sat)* Name *(Nām)* Creator *(Kartā)* Being *(Purakh);* the true God who is the supreme Lord; the Creator-God, as distinguished from the unmanifested Absolute; a Punjabi composite name for the Lord of the eternal realm called *sach khaṇḍ* (true region) or *sat lok* (true realm) by many Indian mystics. The *Ādi Granth* uses this expression in its opening stanzas, *"Ekankār Sat Nām Kartā Purakh"*, characteristic of

the cryptic style of much of Indian spiritual literature, and generally expanded in translation:

> There is but one God *(Ekankār):*
> True is His Name, creative His personality,
> and immortal His form *(Sat Nām Kartā Purakh).*
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1, MMS*

See also: **Ekankār**, **Sat Nām** (3.1).

Sat Purush (H/Pu), **Sat Purakh** (Pu) *Lit.* True *(Sat)* Lord or Being *(Purush, Purakh);* the true Father; God; specifically, the Lord of *sat lok,* the eternal realm; the supreme Lord who presides over *sat lok* and all creation below it. He is called *sat,* from the Sanskrit root *as* (to be), because He exists eternally, unchanging and unchangeable. In Sanskrit, however, the term *satpurusha* only means 'a good man', having no mystical connotation.

Sat Purush is described as a boundless ocean of love, light, wisdom, intelligence and power. His kingdom is the lost world of beauty, light, peace and joy that all human beings, consciously or unconsciously, seek. *Sat lok* is the true kingdom of heaven, and *Sat Purush* is the true Father of the soul.

Sat Purush is the positive power, as opposed to *Kāl,* the negative power. Mystics have said that in the 'beginning', before time and creation existed, the nameless Lord *(Anāmī Purush)* was an ocean of Being, absorbed within Himself. Then, when His *mauj* or will surged and He brought the creation into being, He first created 'subdivisions' within His eternal Self. Some Indian mystics have called these 'divisions', *agam lok, alakh lok* and *sat lok,* each with its own respective lord or being *(purush). Sat Purush* is the lord of *sat lok.* In fact, however, they are all aspects of one undivided Godhead. Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh has described the creation of *Sat Purush:*

> I am the inaccessible nameless Lord, free from *māyā;*
> By my sweet will,
> I remain absorbed in myself in the highest region.
> No one knows my secret until I choose to reveal it.
> Firstly, I assumed the form of the inaccessible One *(Agam).*
> Secondly, I became the imperceptible Being *(Alakh Purush),*
> a unique One.
> Thirdly, I became the true Being *(Sat Purush),*
> and I myself created the true region *(sat lok)....*
> At this stage, I am revealed and realized in my true form.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 26:1.17–20, 22, SBP pp.215–16*

It is from *Sat Purush* that the creation began by the emanation of God's Word or creative Power. At first there are regions of pure spirit. Below these purely spiritual realms, the negative power or the universal mind is brought into being. All creation below the level of the negative power is under its control, its 'duty' or 'purpose' being to keep souls within these realms. The negative power is entirely a creation of the positive power and, under the will of the highest and nameless Lord, it acts according to the divine purpose. The negative power derives power only from *Sat Purush* through the Creative Word or divine Sound, and when the Lord wants to wind up the show of creation, He reabsorbs the entire creation into Himself. Like the switching off of a lamp in a projector, the projected image then ceases to exist.

Difficult though it may be to understand, there is purpose and design to this affair, and for souls lost in the creation, a way is left open for their release, through the doorway of the human form. *Sat Purush* Himself incarnates in human form as a Saint or *Satguru* (true *Guru*) and, coming to His creation, He contacts and takes certain souls back to Himself. According to such Saints, the real form and purpose of the supreme Lord is indescribable in human language. The *Satguru* is a human incarnation of *Sat Purush,* but it is only on reaching *sat lok* that a soul actually realizes this.

The spiritual or *Shabd* (Word) form of the *Satguru* being everywhere and within everything, He works simultaneously on the various higher planes of the creation, while His physical form carries out the work of imparting instructions (initiation, *upadesh*) to human beings, so that their souls might be liberated from the bondage of the mind and body. He also helps the lower orders of life so that they might be rendered fit for a human incarnation in their next birth.

Dariyā Sāhib tells the story of the sending of a Saviour or Master, allegorically:

When many aeons had passed away,
  the merciful Lord was moved with compassion,
  since none of the souls
  who had gone (with *Kāl*) had ever returned.
No soul was sent back (by *Kāl*) to its true home.
So *Sat Purush* spoke to His emanation:
"O *Jogajit* (conqueror of all spells),
  in the ocean of the world,
  all souls have fallen victim to tyranny....
(Therefore), O valiant one, go to the land of *Kāl,*
  awaken the souls and bring them back to the ocean of bliss.
When you enter the womb and take human birth,
  then will people know my secrets through you."

Dariyā Sāhib, Gyān Dīpak, Chaupaī 753, 755–58, DYD p.114, GD p.167

Guru Arjun puts it simply:

> He is the One, dust of whose feet sanctifies one.
> O friend, that sacred dust:
> even the angelic persons and gods obtain not.
> The true Personality (*Sat Purakh,* true Being) of the true *Guru*
> is the embodiment of the transcendent Lord,
> meeting with whom, one is ferried across.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1078, MMS*

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes in the same vein:

> *Sat Purush* has manifested Himself:
> In the form of a Saint,
> He has become the king of the world.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 24:1.86, SBP p.204*

When the soul reaches *sat lok,* the work of the Master is fulfilled. *Sat Purush,* by His own power, then sends the soul on to the yet higher realms of *alakh lok, agam lok* and *Anāmī.* Nevertheless, when the soul reaches *sat lok* and has the *darshan* (vision) of *Sat Purush,* the disciple of a Master sees his own Master in the form of *Sat Purush,* for here there is only oneness and love.

Sat Purush Rādhā Swāmī (H) *Lit.* True *(Sat)* Being *(Purush),* Lord *(Swāmī)* of the Soul *(Rādhā);* a composite name for the nameless Lord, used by Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh.

satyaṃ shivaṃ sundaram (S) *Lit.* true *(satya),* benevolent *(shiva)* beautiful *(sundara);* a Sanskrit epithet of *Brahman.*

Saviour, Deliverer, Redeemer (He. *Miflat, Moshia'*) Biblical epithets of God; sometimes referring literally to God's deliverance of a king or prophet from his enemies in the world:

> And David spoke to the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul; and he said, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my Deliverer."
>
> *2 Samuel 22:1–2, KB*

The words attributed to David are also found in one of the psalms,[1] where it is clear that in many instances such terms are meant metaphorically. God saves human beings from their inner enemies or imperfections, granting salvation in a mystic sense:

> Let all those that seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee:
> and let such as love Thy salvation say continually:
> "Let God be magnified.
> But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God:
> Thou art my help and my Deliverer;
> O Lord, make no tarrying."
>
> *Psalm 70:4–5, KJV*

These terms are also used for the spiritual Master, one who saves his disciples from the deceptions of the creation, taking their souls back to their source in God.

See also: **Saviour** (▸2).

1. *Psalm* 18:2; *cf. also Psalms* 31:3, 62:2,16, 71:3.

sela' (He) *Lit.* rock; descriptive of God, conveying a sense of His strength, permanence and dependability.

See **rock**.

self-begotten perfect One One of the many epithets of the supreme Lord used in gnostic writings, as in the *Gospel of the Egyptians,* where the unknown writer claims:

> This great Name of Yours is upon me,
> O self-begotten perfect One who is not outside me.
>
> *Gospel of the Egyptians 66; cf. NHS4 p.156*

See also: **God**, **perfect One**.

Shaddai (He) *Lit.* the Almighty; almighty God; an attributive and descriptive name for God used in the Bible; generally used along with *El* (God) in *El Shaddai* (the all-powerful almighty God).

The derivation of *Shaddai* is uncertain. Most scholars derive it from the term *shadad* (to overpower). Others derive it from the Canaanite term for

the God of the heights, of the mountains, implying 'high', 'all-powerful'. It may also have been derived from the word for breasts *(shadayyim)* referring to God as the nurturer, the giver of all sustenance. Other derivations place its origin in the Aramaic, meaning 'hurler of the arrows of lightning and thunder', or in the Arabic, as 'dispenser of benefits, protector of peace'. Others involve a wordplay, linking *Shaddai* with the word for 'enough *(dai)*', implying that God has provided man with so much, that man says, "Enough!"

Other suggest that it is God who says, "Enough!" The Kabbalists related *Shaddai* to the *sefirah* (emanation) of *Yesod* (Foundation). Speaking of the time of creation, the *Zohar* says:

> *Shaddai* testifies to Him, that when He said to the world, "Enough *(dai)!*", it stayed within its limits, and expanded no further. And so it was (also) with water, wind and fire.
>
> *Zohar 3:275b–285a, Ra'aya Meheimna, WZ1 p.264*

Shaddai was also used as one of the divine names in a repetition or spiritual practice of the Kabbalists known as *hazkarat shemot* (remembrance of names).

Shàng Tì (Shàng Dì) (C) *Lit.* Lord *(Tì)* on High *(Shàng)*. Long before the emergence of Taoism, *Shàng Tì* was a tribal anthropomorphic God, regarded as creator, ruler and judge. With the recognition of Taoism in the sixth century BCE, after the writing of Lǎo Tzu's *Tào Té Chīng, Shàng Tì* was replaced by the concept of *T'iēn,* a more general term referring to Heaven as a transcendent creative power.

See also: **T'iēn** (4.1).

shānti sāgar (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* ocean *(sāgar)* of peace *(shānti);* metaphorically descriptive of the peace of God in which the soul is said to swim contentedly in happiness and bliss.

See also: **sukh sāgar**.

Shepherd (He. *Ro'eh*) A metaphor used throughout the ancient Middle East for both the Lord and the spiritual Master, mystic or prophet. In agrarian and nomadic societies, the metaphor would have been readily understood.

See also: **Ro'eh, Shepherd** (▸2).

shokhen marom (He) *Lit.* He who dwells *(shokhen)* on high *(marom);* God:

> The Lord is exalted,
> for He dwells on high *(shokhen marom).*
> *Isaiah 33:5, KB*

siṃhāsan(a) (S/H), **singhāsan** (Pu) *Lit.* lion *(siṃha, singh)* – seat *(āsan);* hence, throne; metaphorically, the throne or seat of God from where He 'rules' creation; the spiritual home of the Master. Kabīr writes of his ascent to this "throne":

> Now, I have mounted to the Master's throne *(singhāsan),*
> and met with the world Sustainer.
> The pervading God and Kabīr have become one,
> and no one can distinguish between them.
> *Kabīr, Ādi Granth 969, MMS*

See also: **al-'arsh, takht, throne**.

Sirjanhār (H), **Sirjaṇhār** (Pu) *Lit.* one who creates; from *srij* (to create, to form, to make); the Creator; a name of God. Dādū says that this supreme Creator is within:

> The Creator *(Sirjanhār)* is almighty:
> the Almighty is so close to you, O fool!
> *Dādū, Bānī 2, Shabd 49:4, DDB2 p.16*

Ravidās, born into the Indian caste system as a low-caste cobbler, points out that if the same Lord is present in everyone, then who can be considered higher or better than another?

> Deriding some as base or low,
> the ignorant insult and strike them....
> The ignorant are unaware, O Ravidās,
> that the same God is the Creator *(Sirjanhār)* of all.
> *Ravidās, Darshan, Pad 125:1–3, 8–9, RD p.128*

And:

> Earthen pots are all made of the same clay:
> the same Creator *(Sirjanhār)* has created them all.

The same One pervades all beings, O Ravidās:
the same pot maker has fashioned them all.
Ravidās, Darshan, Pad 46:1, RD p.49

Kabīr asks, when the Lord is with you, what is there to be afraid of?

Why are you afraid, O Kabīr,
when the Creator *(Sirjanhār)* is on your side?
When riding an elephant,
fear not the barking of a thousand dogs!
Kabīr, in Sant Bānī Sangrah 1, Dhīraj 2, SBS1 p.48

Sovereign A person exercising supreme authority; a monarch; hence, God; used especially in ancient Middle Eastern religious and mystic literature.

See **King**.

Spentā Mainyu (Av) *Lit.* Holy *(Spentā)* Spirit *(Mainyu);* a Zoroastrian term for the positive power in creation, commonly contrasted with *Akō Mainyu,* the negative spirit or power.

sthir(a) (S/H), **thir**, **asthir** (Pu) *Lit.* steady, still, stable, constant, lasting, motionless, unmoving, unchanging, immutable; hence, when used descriptively of God, permanent, everlasting, eternal:

The Creator alone is seen to be eternal *(asthir):*
all others continue coming and going.
Thou, O Lord, art by Thyself pure:
Thou hast tied down and engaged others in secular pursuits.
Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 54, MMS

The term is also used as an expression for the stillness and steadiness of mind attained in meditation.

See also: **thir** (▸2).

sukh sāgar (H/Pu) *Lit.* ocean *(sāgar)* of happiness *(sukh);* ocean of joy, ocean of peace; metaphorically descriptive of the bliss and love that is God, in which the soul swims ecstatically. Guru Arjun describes the state of a normal

human being, unknowingly gripped by the pain of materiality and *māyā* (illusion), quite unaware of the bliss that is found in God:

> Lord God's meditation *(bhajan)* enters not its (the soul's) mind:
> it sings not even for an instant the praise of Lord,
> the ocean of peace *(sukh sāgar).*
> Of weal and woe, this body is the embodiment:
> it is afflicted with the chronic
> and incurable disease of *māyā.*
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 299, MMS*

This happiness, he says, is found by taking refuge in the *Guru:*

> Thy meditation, O world Lord *(Gobind)* is an ocean of peace *(sukh sāgar):*
> so Thy Saints sing ever Thy praise.
> Clinging to the *Guru*'s feet,
> they obtain manifold mirths, glees and comforts.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 925, MMS*

See also: **shānti sāgar**.

Swāmī (H), **Suāmī** (Pu) *Lit.* lord, master; hence, sovereign, king, husband; used extensively by Indian Saints and sages as an epithet of the supreme Lord or Creator. *Swāmī* is also a title given to yogis, *sādhus* and religious and spiritual teachers in India, as in Swāmī Vivekānanda. In the latter context, the term is often used as *Swāmī Jī,* a form of affectionate and respectful address to holy men of all degrees. Many mystics have used the term for God:

> O my lofty, peerless and endless Lord *(apār beant Suāmī):*
> who can know Thy virtues?
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 802, MMS*

And:

> I worship my Beloved
> who is the Lord *(Swāmī)* of all creation –
> both animate and inanimate.
>
> *Tulsīdās, Rām Charit Mānas 1:118.1, RCM p.131*

T'ài Ī (Tài Yī) (C) *Lit.* Supreme *(T'ài)* One *(Ī),* Grand Unity; also known as *Tà Ī* (the Great One); the Great Instigator; sometimes used synonymously with

T'ài Chí (the Great Beginning, the Supreme Ultimate of Being); the supreme deity of early Chinese shamanistic poetry. *T'ài Ī* was perhaps the first attempt among practitioners of religious Taoism to personalize the abstract concept of *Tào* into the form of a supreme deity. These sects of religious Taoism, which began to form around 100 BCE, focused on more externalized forms of worship, and gradually began to include many kinds of deities – with some schools worshipping thousands – all believed to dwell within each person, and to control the functions of the body, as well as the earth and the cosmos. One of the more prominent of these schools, the Inner Deity Hygiene School, believed that the human brain was divided into nine compartments or 'palaces', each inhabited by one or more different deities. The palace at the centre of the head was called *nì huán* and was believed to be the dwelling place of *T'ài Ī*, the highest deity of the body.

In philosophical Taoism, the older and more mystical school of Taoism, a Supreme Being is never considered part of the teachings, since everything is regarded as being pervaded by and owing its origin to the singular creative Power, *Tào*. However, the concept of Grand Unity, called *T'ài Ī*, is suggested by the revered sage of philosophical Taoism, Chuāng Tzu, and even Lăo Tzu in the *Tào Té Chīng* seems to suggest the idea of a supreme One:

> *Tào* generates one;
> One generates two;
> Two generates three;
> Three generates the ten thousand things *(wàn wù).*
> All things are backed by shade *(i.e. yīn),*
>   and faced by light *(i.e. yáng),*
>   and harmonized by the immaterial breath *(ch'ì).*
>
> *Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 42*

Here, it is perhaps *T'ài Ī* that is implied in the concept of the "One", which is born from *Tào*. The terms *yīn* and *yáng* represent the "Two", which are the dual forces emanating from the One. It is the coalescence of *yīn* and *yáng* that produces a third state, which is the equilibrium or harmony of the "Two". From these "Three", the "ten thousand things" are manifested. The "Three" is sometimes referred to as *sān t'sái*, signifying the spiritual, mental and physical aspects of being, represented respectively by Heaven, Earth and man.

See also: **Tào** (2.2), **T'ài Chí** (2.2).

takht (A/P/U/Pu/H), **takht-gāh-i Malik** (P) *Lit.* throne *(takht);* chair of state, royal seat; throne *(takht-gāh)* of the King *(Malik);* mystically, the seat or

throne of God. The use of the term 'throne' as a metaphor symbolic of the eternal realm, the 'throne' from which God 'rules' the creation, has been in common usage in a variety of Middle Eastern languages for as long as history can be traced. Whether in the human heart or beyond the heavens – inner or outer – the throne expresses the notion that God is a king of infinite power and majesty, beyond the creation, beyond duality, and beyond all human conception. Rūmī writes:

> The throne of the King *(takht-gāh-i Malik)*
> is outside of existence and Nonexistence.
> It lies a hundred thousand years
> beyond affirmation and negation.
> *Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz 477:5049, KSD1 p.277, KDS1 pp.216–17, in SPL p.176*

The term has also come into Indian usage through Islamic influence, and is found in the *Ādi Granth* and the writings of other mystics. Guru Nānak writes:

> There one hears the resounding of strings of the musical instruments,
> and sees the true throne *(takht)* of the sovereign Lord.
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1291, MMS*

And Bulleh Shāh:

> If you would only follow my advice,
> I would seat you on the throne *(takht)* (of God).
> He whom the whole world seeks,
> I will bring to meet with you.
> *Bulleh Shāh, Kullīyāt 57, KBS p.113, SBSU p.197; cf. BS p.317*

See also: **al-'arsh**, **siṃhāsan**, **throne**.

Ṭhākur (H/Pu) *Lit.* lord, master, ruler; an epithet of God:

> Thou art the Master, Thou the Lord *(Ṭhākur)* and Thou my sovereign.
> If it so pleases Thee,
> then alone can Thy devotional service be performed, O Lord.
> Thou art an ocean of merits.
> *Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 726, MMS*

And:

You are God, and I am the soul:
  You are the Lord *(Ṭhākur),* and I am your servant.
You are my father, mother, *Guru* and friend,
  indeed the true benefactor in every way.

Tulsīdās, Vinayapatrikā, Pad 79:3, VTD p.148

thir (Pu) See **sthir**.

throne, throne of God (He. *kisé, lit.* chair, etymologically related to the Arabic and Persian, *kursī*). A seat occupied by a sovereign, bishop or other personage, especially on ceremonial occasions; also, the power or authority invested in the one who occupies such a seat; used throughout the world's mystic literature with a wide spread of meaning, but essentially referring to some focus or seat of mystic power in the hierarchy of creation.

The highest power is considered to be God Himself, and the throne or throne of God was often used by biblical writers and by subsequent Jewish mystics to designate the transcendent spiritual level of the Lord:

Yahweh is in His holy temple,
  Yahweh whose throne is in heaven;
His eyes look down at the world,
  His searching gaze scans all mankind.

Psalm 11:4, JB

Here, the Lord's throne "in heaven" is eternity.

In *Isaiah,* the prophet points out that since all of creation belongs to God already, how can any man-made building be a place where God would come to dwell and take His rest? And using the metaphor of God as the King, he speaks of "heaven" as His "throne" and earth as His "footstool":

Thus says *Yahweh:*
With heaven my throne
  and earth my footstool,
  what house could you build me,
  what place could you make for my rest?

All of this was made by my hand
  and all of this is mine – it is *Yahweh* who speaks.
But my eyes are drawn to the man
  of humble and contrite spirit,
  who trembles at my Word.

Isaiah 66:1–2, JB

Emphasizing the point, he specifically states that it is the humble man who stands in sacred awe of the Word who really pleases God.

In the mystic vision of the Hebrew prophets, the Lord is often described as a king seated on a throne surrounded by his 'hosts', his armies of angels and other heavenly beings. The imagery would have been familiar in the ancient Middle East, a land of small kingdoms, with every king attending to the administration of his realm from his own throne, surrounded by courtiers. The throne was a symbol of their authority and right to govern, just as it is said that a king or queen at any particular time is 'on the throne'.

Contemplation of the Lord seated on His divine throne is at the core of early post-biblical Jewish mysticism, often designated 'throne mysticism'. The symbolism of this mystic practice is drawn from biblical descriptions of the Lord seated on a throne of Glory, surrounded by His hosts – His armies of angels and other heavenly beings. As the prophet Micaiah prophesies to the king of Israel:

> Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord:
> "I saw the Lord sitting on His throne,
> and all the host of heaven standing by Him
> on His right hand and on His left."
>
> *1 Kings 22:19, KB*

According to the Bible, the prophet Ezekiel also has a vision of a fantastic *merkavah* (chariot) borne by creatures with many heads and wings, rotating and revolving amidst fire, lightning and sound. Following this vision, Ezekiel sees the Lord seated on His throne. The early mystics used the chariot metaphor to describe their inner spiritual journey, whose goal was to reach the throne region. The term *merkavah* was also used by some of the mystics for the throne itself. On their spiritual journey they traversed seven *hekhalot* (palaces or chambers) – inner spiritual regions – which gave the name to a body of literature recounting their experiences.

In the thirteenth-century Kabbalist text, the *Zohar*, the throne is depicted as being carried by the creatures of Ezekiel's vision, which serve as the steps to the throne. The creatures' wings represent the qualities of God, such as merciful, glorious and so on. But once the devotee comes face to face with the throne of glory itself, the 'wings' are let down – *i.e.* God is no longer known by His qualities or "epithets" – since the devotee is in touch with the true, inner, unpronounceable Holy Name(s) of God Himself. The *Zohar* says:

> It is written, "There were six steps to the throne",[1] six steps to the upper throne (the *Shekhinah*), and six steps to the lower throne. These cannot look upon or know the glory of the throne that is above them, let alone Him who sits upon the throne.

> They (the creatures of the chariot) all stand beneath the throne in fear and trembling, carrying the throne upon their backs, but not knowing whither. Their bodies are joined, as it is said, "their wings were joined to one another"[2] in order to raise it (the throne).
>
> Then all those epithets that conceal the Holy Names rule with their (particular) names, and the Holy One, blessed be He, is (also) given an epithet. And when the throne rests with the epithet of joy, … the creatures "let down their wings";[3] (then) they do not rule with those epithets, and they experience joy at that time … for the Holy One, blessed be He, is then called by other, holy, supernal Names.
>
> *Zohar Ḥadash (Yitro) 41a, WZ2 p.615*

According to Kabbalist interpretations, the steps and the creatures' wings symbolize the various qualities of God, corresponding to the *sefirot* (divine emanations), and understood as levels of spirituality on the inner journey towards divine knowledge. The throne of God was also used as a metaphor for God's glory – His light. The creatures of the chariot are the four cherubs, or archangels, who carry the throne of God. According to this symbolism, these cherubs transmitted the divine light of God's glory.

The throne world of the early Jewish mystics has also been equated with the Greek *Pleroma* (Fullness).[4] It is the spiritual realm of *archons* (rulers), deities, and spiritual potencies and dominions, described by the early Christian gnostics and hermetics – neighbours of the Jewish *Merkavah* and *Hekhalot* mystics, part of the same mystic milieu. Among the gnostics, the seats of power of the various *archons* in the creation were sometimes called thrones as well. In fact, there is a family of metaphors drawn from the administration of worldly realms, and used in descriptions of the creative hierarchy. In the mystical context, this is simply a metaphorical way of describing something that is essentially beyond the capacity of words to express.

The use of the term 'throne', as a mystic metaphor, has been in common usage in a variety of Middle Eastern and Eastern languages and religions, including Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Mandaeanism, Judaism and various Indian languages. In India, it is called *siṃhāsan (lit.* lion-seat, *siṃha-āsan), takht* or *Akāl takht,* the latter being an Indo-Persian hybrid meaning the throne *(takht)* of the Timeless *(Akāl).* In Islam and Sufism, the terms used are *al-'arsh* and *al-kursī,* the latter also meaning the footstool to the throne.

See also: **al-'arsh**, **Hekhalot mystics** (▸2), **al-kursī** (4.1), **merkavah** (▸2), **siṃhāsan**, **takht**.

1. *1 Kings* 10:19.
2. *Ezekiel* 1:9.
3. *Ezekiel* 1:24, 25.
4. Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, MTJM* p.44.

T'iēn Wáng (Tiān Wáng) (C) *Lit.* Heavenly *(T'iēn)* King *(Wáng);* Lord; God as a heavenly ruler whose law is absolute; synonymous with *Shàng Tì* (Lord on High).

See also: **Shàng Tì**.

treasury of (the) Light A gnostic term for the eternity of God, used particularly throughout the *Books of Jeu* and the *Pistis Sophia,* the heavenly realms being described as a series of treasuries, culminating in the "treasury of the Light". According to these mythological and esoteric texts, Jesus teaches his disciples that they will be given certain "mysteries" that will erase the sins of the soul, enabling them to pass through all the "treasuries" and other realms until their souls reach *Jeu,* the "Father of the treasury of the Light":

> Then *Jeu,* the Father of the treasury of the Light, will rejoice over you. Moreover, He will also give to you His mystery and His seal and the great Name of the treasury of the Light.
>
> *Second Book of Jeu 122:50, BC pp.172–73*

In the *Pistis Sophia,* souls are taken by the intermediary, Melchizedek, an emissary of the Light, until they reach the "treasury of the Light":

> And Melchizedek, the Paralemptor (Receiver) of the Light purified them, according to the manner in which he does continually. And he took their light to the treasury of the Light.
>
> *Pistis Sophia 35:26; cf. PS pp.70–71, PSGG p.29*

Elsewhere in this text, Mary speaks of the redemptive power of the divine "Light", describing how this Light will take souls to the "place of the inheritance which is in the treasury of the Light":

> It is the Light which gives power to those who have faith in It. And the Name of Its mystery is for those who trust in It. And It will show them the place of the inheritance which is in the treasury of the Light.
>
> *Pistis Sophia 80:46; cf. PS pp.160–61, PSGG p.66*

Vāhiguru, **Vāhaguru** (Pu) See **Wāhiguru**.

Veparwāh (Pu), **beparwāh** (H/Pu) *Lit.* without *(be)* care *(parwāh);* without care, concern or worry; hence, carefree, unconcerned, independent; also, the carefree One, as an epithet of God. The term is also used in a negative sense, as

uncaring or indifferent. Mystically, however, it is generally used as a name of God:

> There is but one throne and one king:
> the absolute Lord (*Veparwāh,* the carefree One)
> is contained in all places.
> The three worlds *(tribhavaṇ)* are the creation of that sublime Lord:
> He, the formless Lord, is inaccessible and inapprehensible.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1188, MMS*

Veparwāh is the popular form, used almost exclusively for God; *beparwāh* is generally used for an individual, as for the soul who becomes carefree by surrendering to the divine will:

> My protector watches over my head,
> and I think not of another.
> With the support of Thy Name alone, O Lord,
> I remain carefree *(beparwāh).*
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 884, MMS*

vibhutva (S) *Lit.* being everywhere; omnipresence, all-pervasiveness; used in the *Upanishads* for the omnipresence of the supreme Reality *(Brahman)* in all things:

> You are the dark blue bee,
> You are the green parrot with red eyes;
> You are the cloud, pregnant with lightning,
> You are the seasons, and the seas.
> Having no beginning,
> You dwell in omnipresence *(vibhutva)* –
> You, from whom all worlds are born.
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 4:4*

Vibhutva is also used as an epithet of *Vishṇu* and *Shiva.*

Viṭṭhal(a) (S/H/M), **Biṭṭhal**, **Bīṭhal**, **Biṭhalā** (Pu) A Marathi name of God, especially as the god worshipped at Pandhārpur in Maharashtra, commonly called *Viṭhobā,* and believed to be an incarnation either of *Vishṇu* or *Kṛishṇa* himself. The origin of the name is unknown.

The Maharashtrian mystic, Tukārām, whose family members were worshippers of the idol of *Viṭṭhal* at Pandhārpur, uses the name extensively in his poetry as a name for the supreme Lord:

What cannot be understood will be realized
by uttering the Name of the Lord *(Viṭṭhal)* alone.
What is invisible will become visible
by uttering the Name of the Lord *(Viṭṭhal)* alone....
What is unobtainable will be abundantly obtained
by the ceaseless repetition of the Name of the Lord *(Viṭṭhal).*
The soul, bound in every way, says Tukā,
will attain liberation
through the Name of the Lord *(Viṭṭhal)* alone.

Tukārām, Gāthā 3047, STG p.510

Likewise, Nāmdev, also from Maharashtra, some of whose writings are preserved in the *Ādi Granth,* speaks of God's omnipresence:

Here is the Lord *(Bīṭhal),* there is the Lord *(Bīṭhal):*
without the Lord, there is no world whatsoever.
Supplicates Nāmdev: Thou, O Lord, art fully contained
in all the places and interspaces.

Nāmdev, Ādi Granth 485, MMS

Wāhiguru, Wāhgurū (Pu) *Wāh* is an expression of wonder at anything great, good and so on. In the *Ādi Granth,* it is an expression of wonder when the highest form of the Master or *Guru* is realized, as in *"Wāhiguru! Wāhiguru!"* – "Glorious Master! Wonderful Master! Blessed Master!" The expression has become a Sikh term for God:

Thou hast created eighty-four *lakhs* (hundred thousands) of species
and given to them all sustenance since that very time.
O my blessed *Guru* (*Wāhgurū,* wonderful Lord),
it is all through Thy gift that Thine attendants
remain fulfilled all the ages through.

Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 1403, MMS

wajh (A/P) *Lit.* face, visage or countenance *(wajh);* metaphorically, the face of God; the face of the Real; the divine Essence; *wajh* is synonymous with the Persian *rū.*

In the *Qur'ān,* seekers after spirituality are called "those who seek the countenance *(wajh)* of the Lord".[1] In Sufi literature, the most often quoted verse regarding *wajh* is, "Everything is perishable except His face *(wajh).*"[2] All aspects of the creation are perishable; only "His face" is imperishable. "His face" is that which is everlasting and unchanging, God Himself. Shāh

Ni'mat Allāh Valī writes:

> God says: "Everything is perishable … except His face *(wajh)*." The Prophet of God declared: "If He lifted the seventy thousand veils of light and darkness, the tremendous majesty of His visage *(wajh)* would utterly consume everything in His creation that His eye should regard."
>
> *Shāh Ni'mat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV4 p.275, in FNI1 p.96, in SSE1 p.66*

Rūmī expands on the same passage:

"Everything is perishable except His face *(wajh)*":
Unless you are in His face (essence, *wajh*),
 do not seek to exist.
When anyone has passed away from himself
 in my face (essence, *wajh*),
 the words "everything is perishable"
 are not applicable to him….
Whoever utters 'I' and 'we' at the door of the Divine,
 is turned back from the door.

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:3052–53, 3055; cf. MJR2 p.166

God's "face" is the only reality. The *Qur'ān* says that His "countenance" is everywhere:

Wherever you turn:
 there is *Allāh*'s countenance *(wajh)*.

Qur'ān 2:115; cf. AYA

Maghribī says that created beings are like a mirror reflecting the image of that face. However, he then corrects himself, saying that the emanation, the mirror and the reflection are all God. There *is* nothing whatever other than God:

I am your mirror and Your emanation,
 the mirror of the visage *(wajh)* of Your Essence.
Ah, no, what error! That emanation,
 all and everything, is only You.

Maghribī, in FNI1 p.96; cf. in SSE1 p.66

Ḥāfiẓ says that, within the ever changing shadow show of the world, "God's face" must always be contemplated:

Dispel all doubts, and you will be a seer,
 if you contemplate God's face *(wajh)* in everything.
Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.234, DIH p.374; cf. in SSE1 p.68

The allied expression, *wajh al-iṭlāq wa-al-taqayyud* (the face of unity and diversity – *lit.* the face of liberating and binding) implies that God is both a unity in diversity and a diversity in unity; He is all that exists.

The expression *wajh al-shay'* (the face of the thing, the face of the object) is also sometimes used for God, conveying that God is everything. However, the creation hides the face of God. In keeping with this imagery, the creation is sometimes called 'the veil *(al-ḥijāb)*', because it hides His face.

See also: **countenance of God, rū**.

1. *Qur'ān* 30:38, 13:22.
2. *Qur'ān* 28:88.

Wakan-Tanka (Native North American) *Lit.* Great Spirit; a North American Lakota (Sioux) name for the supreme and omnipresent Being.

See **Great Spirit**.

Walī, al-, al-Walīy (A/P) *Lit.* the Friend, the Protector, the Patron; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh.* God is that Friend who helps in all difficulties:

What! Have they taken (for worship)
 protectors besides Him?
But it is *Allāh* – He is the Protector *(al-Walīy)*,
 and it is He who gives life to the dead.
Qur'ān 42:9, AYA

The term is also used for the Beloved of God – the Saint, the spiritual guide or *Murshid.*

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná, Dūst**.

xvāthrē (Av) The abode of light; a Zoroastrian term for the eternal realm to which *Ahurā* draws his worshippers through the power of His Primal Mind *(Vohu Manō)* and Truth *(Ashā):*

How I long, *Mazdā Ahurā,* to reach up to You
through Your *Vohu Manō* (Primal Mind);
Let me be granted, Lord, in both the worlds –
this world of body and that of spirit –
the blessings that flow through *Ashā* (Truth),
whereby You lead Your faithful
into the abode of light *(xvāthrē).*

Zarathushtra, Yasna 28:2; cf. DSZ p.94

See also: **garō demāna**.

Yahweh, Yehovah, Jehovah (He) *Lit.* God, Lord; the personal name of God, according to Judaism, said to have been revealed to Moses on Mount Ḥoreb;[1] commonly understood in traditional folk etymology to be derived from the biblical *Ehyeh asher Ehyeh* – 'I will be what I will be' or 'I am what I am';[2] believed by language scholars to come from the root *hwh,* an older form of *hyh* (to be), appearing in the Bible in the future present causative tense, and meaning: 'He causes to be; He brings into existence'; alternatively regarded as a unique and simultaneous conjugation of the verb 'to be' in the past, present and future tenses, implying that God 'is', 'was' and 'will be' simultaneously, thus expressing the timeless, eternal quality of the Supreme Being.

The name, known as the tetragrammaton, is comprised of the four Hebrew consonants corresponding to Y-H-W-H. As the Hebrew script of the Bible has no vowels, pronunciation was always a matter of tradition – handed down from one generation to the next. The *Encyclopedia Judaica* says that "the true pronunciation of the name *YHWH* was never lost. Several early Greek writers of the Christian Church testify that the name was pronounced *Yahweh.*"[3]

It is known that *YHWH* was spoken by Jews as *Yahweh* at least until the destruction of the first Temple in 586 BCE. However, because as time passed the name came to be regarded as too sacred to speak out loud, other names of God were spoken in its place. By the third century BCE, *Adonai* had become the traditional name used as a replacement. When vowel points were added to the Hebrew written language in the sixth century CE, the rabbis used the vowel points belonging to *Adonai* for the written *YHWH,* in order to remind the reader of the name to use when speaking *YHWH* aloud.

It was not until the Middle Ages that written vowel points were added to the Bible. *YHWH* was then given the vowel points belonging to *Adonai.* European Christian scholars, however, did not understand that this was just an *aide-mémoire,* and thus the strange hybrid name Yehovah or Jehovah resulted, rather than *Yahweh* – a valiant attempt to render the four consonants of *YHWH* with the vowels of *Adonai!* As the Christian scholars did not feel any

constraint in pronouncing the name, they freely adopted the term Jehovah, where Jews would say *Adonai.* Over time, Jews became reluctant even to say *Adonai,* and thus the custom arose of simply saying *'ha-Shem'* (the Name) or *ha-Kadosh baruḥ-Hu* (the Holy One, blessed be He), or other names and epithets.

Why such a strong prohibition on pronouncing this outer name of God arose is uncertain. It is usually attributed to a sense of reverence, possibly as an extension of the traditional Near Eastern taboo customarily applied to anything truly holy, holiness itself being characterized by separateness and unapproachability. Other scholars view it as a misunderstanding of the third of the Ten Commandments, that prohibits people from taking "the Lord's name in vain".[4] This commandment actually means, they say, that one should not swear falsely by the name of *YHWH,* your God.[5]

It is also possible that some combination of these factors was coupled with a confusion of the outer, spoken names of God with the inner, mystic, ineffable Name that is beyond speech or pronunciation. It is not a case of choosing not to pronounce the Name. This inner, creative, divine essence or Power is not made up of words, and simply cannot be expressed in language.

The medieval Kabbalists linked the biblical names for God to one or other of the *sefirot* (emanations), using these names in a repetition practice called *hazkarat shemot* (remembrance of the names). Each name was understood to describe a particular attribute of God, a particular level of spirituality, a particular *sefirah* in the series of *sefirot* through which the creation took place. *Yahweh* was considered to correspond to the *sefirah* of Splendour *(Tiferet). Tiferet* is also the point of unity and harmony for the *sefirot* above and the remaining seven *sefirot* below it, and is thus regarded as the axis upon which the entire creation rests. Consequently, it often represents the entirety of the *sefirot.* For these reasons, *Tiferet* was the object of many Kabbalist prayers addressed to God.

See also: **God (in Judaism)**.

1. *Exodus* 3.
2. *Exodus* 3:14.
3. "God, Names of", in *Encyclopedia Judaica, EJCD.*
4. *Exodus* 20:7.
5. "God, Names of", in *Encyclopedia Judaica, EJCD.*

Yahweh Ẓeva'ot (He) *Lit.* Lord *(Yahweh)* of Hosts *(Ẓeva'ot);* Lord of Armies; from *ẓava* (army); the Lord having angelic forces at His command; the Lord who brings the heavenly hosts into existence; a common biblical name of God; also spelled, *Yahweh saba'oth,* and found as the variant *Elohim Ẓeva'ot.*

Symbolically, the name represents God's authority as the expression of His divine Will or Command prevailing throughout creation. The name appears in the Bible, as in the *Psalms:*

> How lovely are Your dwelling places,
> O Lord of Hosts *(Yahweh Ẓeva'ot)!*
> My soul longs, indeed it faints,
> for the courts of the Lord;
> My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.
> Even the sparrow has found a house,
> and the swallow a nest for herself,
> where she may lay her young at Your altars,
> O Lord of Hosts *(Yahweh Ẓeva'ot)*, my King, and my God.
> Happy are those who dwell in Your house,
> ever praising You.
>
> *Psalm 84:2–5, JCL*

The *Zohar* also speaks of

> all the lower powers and spirits and holy souls alluded to in the expression 'Lord of Hosts *(Yahweh Ẓeva'ot)*'.
>
> *Zohar 1:17a, ZSS1 p.71, JCL*

See also: **Yahweh**.

Yār (P) *Lit.* friend, comrade; assistant, defender; lover, mistress; in Sufi writings, the Lord; also the spiritual Master, the *Pīr,* the *Shaykh* or *Murshid.* In Sufi literature, it is often impossible to tell whether the writer is referring to God or to his Master, or whether any distinction is being made at all:

> Neither veil nor screen has the beauty of the true Beloved *(Yār).*
> Lay aside the dust of the path (of your existence),
> so that you can see (the true Beloved).
> Unless you leave the house of nature (the body),
> how can you enter the street of Truth?
>
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHM (129:7–8) p.144, DIH p.122; cf. DHA p.54, DHWC (125:6–7) p.262*

See also: **Dūst**, **Yār** (▸2).

yoshev ha-keruvim (He) *Lit.* who sits *(yoshev)* + the cherubim *(keruvim);* He who sits above (or upon) the cherubim. The term is descriptive of God's spiritual height, 'seated' above all the angelic beings:

And Ḥezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said, "O Lord God of Israel who sits upon the *keruvim (yoshev ha-keruvim)*, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; You have made heaven and earth."

2 Kings 19:15; cf. JCL, KB

Yoẓer (He) *Lit.* one who forms or creates; hence, a potter; also, as a verb, 'he forms', 'he creates'; sometimes, 'he created', 'he formed', the present tense being used when the past tense (usually, *yaẓer*) is implied; an epithet of God used in the Bible with both meanings, sometimes in a play on words. Particularly as the potter, the name is used to evoke a sense of humility in the face of God as the Creator. The term is related to *'olam ha-yeẓirah* (the realm of formation), the third realm from the highest in the system of four realms described in the Kabbalah, possibly corresponding to the astral realm of modern terminology.

And the Lord God formed *(yoẓer)* man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the Breath of Life; and man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed *(yaẓer)*.

Genesis 2:7–8, KJV

For thus says the Lord who created *(boreh)* the heavens,
God Himself who formed *(yoẓer)* the earth and made it,
He (who) has established it,
He (who) created it not in vain,
He (who) formed *(yoẓer)* it to be inhabited:
"I am the Lord; and there is no one else."

Isaiah 45:18, JCL

For, behold, He who forms *(yoẓer)* the mountains, and creates the wind, and declares to man what is his thought, who makes the morning darkness, and treads on the high places of the earth, the Lord, the God of Hosts, is His name.

Amos 4:13, JCL

But now, O Lord, You are our Father:
We are the clay, and You our potter *(yoẓer)*,
and we are all the work of Your Hand.

Isaiah 64:7, JCL

The image of the potter is appropriate for God in his relationship to humanity. Not only is He the Creator, but just as the potter moulds the clay from without, holding it and giving it support from within, so the Lord guides the individual who turns to Him through his life experiences, while giving the necessary internal spiritual support:

> The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying,
> Arise, and go down to the potter's house *(bet ha-yoẓer),*
> and there I will cause you to hear my words.
> Then I went down to the potter's house,
> and, behold, he was working at the wheels.
> And the utensil that he made of clay
> was spoiled in the hand of the potter *(yoẓer);*
> So he made again another utensil,
> as it seemed good to the potter *(yoẓer)* to make.
> Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying,
> "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter *(yoẓer)?*"
> said the Lord.
> "Behold, as the clay is in the potter's *(yoẓer)* hand,
> so are you in my hand, O house of Israel."
>
> *Jeremiah 18:1–6, JCL*

See also: **'olam ha-yeẓirah** (4.1).

Yüén Shĭh T'iēn Tsūn (Yuán Shĭ Tiān Zūn) (C) *Lit.* Primordial *(Yüén Shĭh)* Celestial *(T'iēn)* venerable *(tsūn);* a deity regarded by religious Taoism as the Supreme Being, who came into existence at the time of creation of Heaven and Earth, and was the administrator thereof. After some time, he turned this administration over to the Jade Emperor *(Yǜ Huáng),* who had become a celestial immortal (millions of aeons earlier) after attaining perfection through the practice of great austerities.

See also: **Yǜ Huáng** (4.1).

ẓaddik, ẓedek (He) *Lit.* righteous, truthful, just; also, righteousness, truthfulness, justice; also eternity, permanence, deliverance; descriptive of God:

> For the Lord is righteous *(ẓaddik),*
> He loves righteousness *(ẓeddakot);*
> The upright shall behold His face.
>
> *Psalm 11:7, KB*

Ẓaddik is also used to describe devout and spiritual people, including the mystic or spiritual teacher who embodies the divine attributes of truth and righteousness. The term thus implies more than human goodness. It also includes the true holiness or spirituality of which God is the source.

Often in the Bible and elsewhere, *ẓaddik* and *ẓedek* are translated to mean the quality of righteousness associated with law and judgment, *i.e.* justice. But the terms are also used to express the quality of justice brought about through charity *(ẓedakah),* and called 'righteous acts' or good deeds. Here, justice is meant in the sense of fairness and mercy to those apparently deprived of it.

See also: **Ẓaddik** (▸2).

Ẓāhir, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the Outward; one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh;* an epithet of God, commonly used in conjunction with *al-Bāṭin* (the Inward). Together, these two names indicate that He is both manifest *(ẓāhir)* and hidden *(bāṭin),* both immanent and transcendent, both present everywhere throughout the creation and utterly beyond the creation. In the *Qur'ān, al-Ẓāhir* indicates that He is the beginning and the end of everything, and that there is nothing beyond or outside of Him:

> He is the First *(al-Awwal)* and the Last *(al-Ākhir),*
> the Outward *(al-Ẓāhir)* and the Inward *(al-Bāṭin);*
> He has knowledge of everything.
>
> *Qur'ān 57:3, KI*

Sufis and mystics have always maintained that only God exists and everything has its being within Him. This is not a concept for intellectual debate, rather a description of a Reality to be experienced.

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná**, **al-Bāṭin**.

Zeus (Gk) The supreme god of the ancient Greeks, becoming ruler of gods and men after dethroning his father *Kronos* and defeating the Titans; counterpart to the Roman *Jupiter. Zeus* was a major character player in many of the myths and legends of ancient Greece. He was married to his sister *Hera,* and the father by her and others of many gods, demigods and mortals. His major weapons were thunderbolts; he ruled the heavens, while his brothers *Poseidon* and *Hadēs* ruled respectively over the sea and underworld.

To the mystics of the period, *Zeus* was also perceived as the mystic Source of all, the Supreme Being, as in the text *On the Cosmos,* normally considered to be pseudo-Aristotelian:

Though He is One, He has many names, according to the many effects He Himself produces.... So it is rightly written in the Orphic books:

Zeus is the first-born, *Zeus* is last,
the lord of lightning:
Zeus is the head, *Zeus* the centre:
from *Zeus* comes all that is;
Zeus is the foundation of the earth
and the starry heavens;
Zeus is a man,
Zeus an immortal Maid (Virgin, *i.e.* Wisdom);
Zeus is the Breath of all things,
Zeus is the Spring of tireless fire;
Zeus is the root of ocean,
Zeus is the sun and moon;
Zeus is King,
Zeus is the Master of all,
the Lord of the lightning.
For He hid all men away,
and has brought them again to the lovely Light,
from the holiness of His heart, working great marvels.

Pseudo-Aristotle, On the Cosmos 7:401a–b, SCC pp.404–7

See also: **God (among the early Greeks)**, **gods (Greek)** (4.2).

Zion See **holy mount**.

ẓur (He) *Lit.* rock, mountain; a simile for God, conveying a sense of His strength, permanence and dependability; from the same root as the Arabic *ṭūr* (mountain).

See **rock**.

2.2 The Absolute and the Relative

Though the infinite God cannot be understood by the finite human intellect, this has never prevented the exercise of intellect in the attempt to do so. Reality, Truth, time, space, eternity, infinity, oneness, multiplicity, and other allied concepts have always intrigued the philosophically minded. This has resulted in the kind of terms found in this section.

Key entries: **al-Dhāt, dhunātmak, hast, sat, Tào, Truth, varṇātmak nām.**

abhed(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* without *(a)* difference *(bheda);* hence, absence of difference or distinction, non-difference, non-duality, nonseparateness; thus, similarity, sameness, identity, unity; also, not different, identical, indistinguishable.

The *Vedas* and *Upanishads* have always held that God or the absolute Reality is one and undivided. The essential point upon which the various schools of Vedantic philosophy differ is in the relationship between the soul *(ātman)* and *Brahman* (absolute Reality). These differing schools are associated with particular teachers:

1. Madhva (*c.*1197–1276 CE), principal exponent of the dualistic school *(Dvaita),* taught that there is a difference *(bheda)* between *ātman* and *Brahman.*

2. Shankara (C8th or C9th) and the Advaitins taught that there is no difference *(abheda)* between *ātman* and *Brahman.* This school ia called *Advaita* (non-dualism).

3. Nimbārka (C13th) taught that there is both a difference and a non-difference between the two; hence, his system of *Vedānta* is called *Bhedabheda* (difference/non-difference) or *Dvaitādvaita* (dualism/non-dualism). *Bhedabheda* is also the name given quite independently to the view of Jain metaphysics that substance and its qualities can never be separated.

4. Vallabha (*c.*1481–1533) took this idea a step further. His system is called *Shuddha Advaita* (pure non-dualism) or *Achintya Bhedabheda* – that is, the relationship between *ātman* and *Brahman* is inconceivable *(achintya),* utterly beyond the mind.

Shankara is credited with being the foremost exponent of *abheda,* to whom the term meant the absence of any difference between the soul and *Brahman.* Speaking of the relationship of the soul to God, he says:

> In whom all difference ceases, like a vast sheet of water without any waves, ever free, undivided One, *Brahman* – thou art That. Think this in thine own self.
>
> *Shankara, Vivekachūḍāmaṇi 259, VC p.119*

Perfect Masters similarly speak of *abheda* (non-difference) between the soul and the supreme Lord, whom they call by many names including the nameless Being *(Anāmī Purush),* the highest Lord *(Parameshvar)* and so on. They say that only when the soul merges into God and becomes one with Him can the highest Reality be comprehended. Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh is writing in the name of the Divine, when – using a play on the word *bhed* which also means secret or mystery – he says that there is no difference between the soul and God:

Listen to your own secret *(bhed)*, O soul:
you were always indistinguishable *(abhed)* from me.
Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 26:2.38, SBP p.216

Saints have also used *abhed* as descriptive of God. In the *Ādi Granth*, the term also has the more general meaning of secret, mysterious or inscrutable:

In the search, search, search of my Lord,
wander I in woods and other places.
Such is my auspicious Lord *(Bhagvān)*,
that He is undeceivable, imperishable and inscrutable *(abhed)*.
Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 816, MMS

See also: **bheda**.

'adam (A/P) *Lit.* nonexistence. *'Adam*, as nonexistence, has two meanings. Firstly, it refers to that which is beyond the existence of phenomena, *i.e.* the divine, absolute Reality. Secondly, and conversely, it refers to the nonexistence or unreality of phenomena in relation to the pure Being or Existence of the Divine. *'Adam* is often contrasted with *wujūd* (being, existence), appearing in the same kind of contexts as the two terms *hastī* (existence) and *nīstī* (nonexistence).

'Adam was also used extensively by the Arabic Aristotelians for the term *privatio* (deprivation, absence). This Aristotelian concept holds that all 'becoming' (*i.e.* the existence of things) is only the manifestation of potential hidden within Nonbeing. Thus, *'Adam*, within itself, contains its opposite in potential form. In Islamic philosophy, the *Mu'tazilah* school maintained that the archetype or pattern of all created things existed prior to creation. This existence was in potential form, hidden within the sublime consciousness of the divine Essence *(Dhāt)*. In the process of creation, He gave the accident *('araḍ)* of existence to those patterns already existing in His consciousness.

See also: **'araḍ** (5.2), **hast**, **al-wujūd**.

aḥadīyah (A), **aḥadīyat** (P) *Lit.* absolute oneness; unity, singularity, transcendent unity, concord; the highest level of absolute oneness, an aspect of the divine unity, second only to the ultimate divine Essence *(Dhāt)*. In Sufism *aḥadīyah* means the supreme unity that is not the object of any distinctive knowledge, and is therefore not accessible as such to created beings. Only God himself knows Himself in His unity. As a spiritual state, this unity implies the extinction of every trace of the created.

Sufis speak of three levels of divine consciousness above the origin of the *Logos*, the Creative Word. All three are called 'oneness':

1. *Waḥdānīyah* or *wāḥidīyah* is the oneness that includes all multiplicity. This is the level from which the divine will emanates as the *Logos,* the creative Power, and from which emanate the multitudinous forms that make up the creation. *Wāḥidīyah* is the plane of consciousness where *al-Wāḥid* (the One) speaks the divine command, "Be *(Kun)!*", bringing the creation into existence.

2. *Waḥdah* is the plane of consciousness above *wāḥidīyah,* and is the 'oneness' that excludes all multiplicity. It represents the first stirrings of consciousness within the Divine of the desire to create.

3. *Aḥadīyah* is the plane of eternal consciousness above *waḥdah* and is absolute, all-inclusive oneness. *Aḥadīyah* is derived from *aḥad,* which means 'one' in an absolute and all-encompassing sense. By contrast, *wāḥid,* the root of *wāḥidīyah* and *waḥdah,* means 'one' in the sense of the number one.[1]

Shabistarī associates *aḥadīyah* with the realm of the creation called *'ālam al-lāhūt* (realm of divinity). In his *'avālim-i kullī* (all the worlds together, totality of the realms), this is designated the highest region.

See also: **Ādi Nirañjan** (2.1), **al-Aḥad** (2.1), **'Atika Kadisha** (2.1), **Ayn-Sof** (2.1), **Binah** (4.1), **Ekankār** (2.1), **Ḥokhmah** (3.1), **sefirot** (4.1), **waḥdah**, **waḥdānīyah**, **wāḥid**, **wāḥidīyah**.

1. See *e.g.* 'Ināyat Khān, *Sufi Message, SMIK1* p.111, *SMIK5* pp.25–26, 33.

ākāshavat (S) *Lit.* like *(vat)* space *(ākāsha);* hence, all-embracing, all-encompassing, all-pervasive, spacious; used descriptively in the *Upanishads* of *Brahman,* the absolute Reality which is said to be all-pervasive like *ākāsha.*

Advaita Vedantists reason that although one can, for example, speak of the space enclosed by separate earthenware pots, space is actually one continuum, an indivisible expanse, not many and divisible. Likewise, they point out that the apparently real barriers of individual bodies do not indicate the plurality and divisibility of God and the soul. Though there is a soul in every body, and the essence of every soul is God, God is not many, but one. Using this example of space and pots to illustrate the indivisibility of souls even when incarnate in separate bodies, Gauḍapāda observes:

> The *Ātman* (Self) is said to be manifest in the form of *jīvas* (incarnate souls) just as space *(ākāsha) (ākāshavat)* exists as the spaces *(ākāshas)* enclosed in pots.
>
> *Gauḍapāda, Kārikā 3:3 on Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*

And Shankara completes the picture:

> Like space *(ākāshavat)*, I *(Brahman)* fill all things,
> within and without.
> Changeless *(achyuta)*, I am always pure, the same in all,
> unattached, stainless *(nirmal)* and immovable.
>
> *Shankara, Ātmabodha 35*

See also: **ākāsha** (5.1).

alif (A/P) The letter 'A'; the first letter of the Arabic/Persian/Urdu alphabet; used to denote *Allāh* or God because it is the initial letter of the word *Allāh* (God). It indicates the First *(al-Awwal)*, the Beginning, one of the attributes of *Allāh*.

The letter *alif* is written as a vertical line, a single stroke, the mark of the number one. Thus, in Sufi lore, it suggests not only the One who was in the beginning, but also the One who is Single, beyond all duality. It symbolizes absolute oneness, pure and free from qualifications, and thus becomes the symbol of the spiritually free. It also implies the unity of all creatures with the Creator, the unity of being:

> Who are we?
> In this tangled world,
> what is there other than He who is single like *alif?*
> Nothing! nothing!
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1514; cf. MJR2 p.83*

The Punjabi Sufi Sulṭān Bāhū says that everything that needs to be known is contained in the letter *alif.* Salvation lies in direct experience of the One, not in intellectual and theological learning:

> They learned everything and became great scholars,
> but few learned the lesson of *alif.*
> Those who learned everything never found the One.
> Those who learned the lesson of Oneness
> found the essence of everything.
>
> *Sulṭān Bāhū, Bait 30, SBU p.324, SBE (28) pp.246–47*

Bulleh Shāh writes similarly:

> This knowledge will be of no avail:
> all that you need to know is *alif.*

Life is fleeting, its end uncertain:
  gather no more knowledge, O friend!

Bulleh Shāh, Qānūn-i 'Ishq 80, QI pp.277–78, SBSU p.350, BS p.219

Playing on imagery associated with the schoolmaster who teaches the alphabet and the divine Master who teaches the basics of spirituality, Ḥāfiẓ says simply that just one letter, *alif,* symbolizing the stature of his divine Teacher, is written on his "heart":

On the tablet of my heart is nothing
  but the (upright) *alif* of the Friend's stature:
What can I do?
My Teacher gave me no other letter to memorize.

Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.191, DHM (415:5) p.378, DIH p.318; cf. DHWC (416:8) p.703, MDI p.417

asat (S/H/Pu), **asatya** (S) *Lit.* not *(a)* truth *(sat, satya);* hence, untrue, false; also, not *(a)* existent *(sat);* hence, without reality, unreal; thus, perishable, illusory. The entire creation is said to be *asat,* because it has no eternal (beginningless and endless) existence, but is subject to constant change:

Thou deemest as false *(asat),* what is true *(sat),*
  and what is perishable, that thou thinkest to be permanent.
Thou graspeth as thine own what belongs to another:
  in such an error thou art gone amiss.

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1001, MMS

In the *Bhagavad Gītā,* Kṛishṇa says that worldly people do not understand that there is an ultimate Reality underlying all things. They think that everything is without Reality or Truth:

They say:
"The universe is without Truth *(asatya),*
  without any real foundation,
  without a God.
Brought into being by sexual union,
  what else but lust can be its cause?"

Bhagavad Gītā 16:8; cf. BGT

Asat also means Nonexistence, Nonbeing or the Unmanifest in the sense of the absolute Reality which lies beyond the existence of all phenomena, which are essentially unreal:

> In the beginning, … there was only Being *(Sat)*,
> one alone, with no second.
> Some say that, in the beginning,
> there was only Nonbeing *(Asat)*,
> one alone, with no second;
> And from that Nonbeing *(Asat)* arose being *(sat)*.
>
> *Chhāndogya Upanishad 6:2.1*

In Vedantic philosophy, *asatya* refers to the passive condition of the absolute Reality *(Brahman)* before the multiplicity of phenomenal existence was manifested.

See also: **hast**, **sat**.

asmā' (A/P) (sg. *ism*) *Lit.* names; *ism* is a general term for any name; also used in Islam as a reference to God and His many names. The *Qur'ān* says:

> But keep in remembrance the Name *(Ism)* of your Lord,
> and devote yourself to Him wholeheartedly.
>
> *Qur'ān 73:8; cf. AYA*

Mystics of many traditions have gone to considerable lengths to explain the distinction between a name and the thing named. Sufis speak of *ism* (the name) and *musammá* (the named). But frequently, after the death of a mystic, prophet or *Rasūl* (Messenger of God), the names which that mystic used in trying to explain inner realities become the substance of the religion or sect that follows in his wake. Mystics warn against satisfaction with the external expression, and enjoin seeking the inexpressible inner Reality. Rūmī writes:

> How can you be freed from selfish desires
> without the cup of *Hū* (Him) –
> O you who have become content with no more of *Hū*
> than the name of *Hū?* …
> Have you ever come across a name
> without the thing itself?
> Have you ever plucked a rose *(gul)*
> from the letters *gāf* and *lām* of *gul?*
> You have pronounced the name *(ism):*
> go, seek the thing named *(musammá)*.
> Know that the moon is on high,
> not (its reflection) in the water of the stream.

If you would pass beyond name and letter,
O make yourself wholly purged of self.

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:3453, 3456–58; cf. MJR2 p.188

Studying the names given to divine realities is, according to Rūmī, like looking at the reflection of the moon in water. Ultimately, if a person wants to know the moon itself, he must look up to see the moon in the sky, rather than focusing only on the reflection. Thus, Rūmī says that the only way to go beyond the level of names to the realization of the thing named is to be 'wholly purged of self'. So long as the soul has not learnt to leave the body and enter the inner realms, nothing can be known of the higher realities. Until then, only the names given to those realities by mystics who have traversed that path can be known. That is why it is so difficult to develop even the belief that many *ṭabaqāt* (levels, strata) of creation exist beyond the physical plane. People busy themselves with the study of the words and names used by mystics, rather than struggling to find the *musammá* (thing named). As Rūmī says, "Know that *maḥw* (self-effacement) is needed, not *naḥw* (grammar, the science of words and names)."[1] Mystics are concerned with the essence, which is the real object of all names: "When one becomes absent to the name, one finds the Named *(idhā ghāba 'ani al-ismi wajada al-musammá).*"[2]

In Islamic theology and philosophy, much importance is given to the many names of *Allāh.* Repeating the names of *Allāh* and contemplating on them is held to confer great blessings. The *Qur'ān* says:

The Most Beautiful Names belong to *Allāh:*
so call on Him by them;
But shun such men as use profanity in His names:
For what they do,
they will soon be requited.

Qur'ān 7:180, AYA

However, when Sufis refer to the divine Names, they do not mean expressible 'words', as symbols made with marks on paper; they are speaking of the divine Attributes themselves. Thus, Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī explains that Sufis do not mean words like 'eternal' and 'all-knowing' when they refer to the divine Names:

> The Lord's being has certain Names and Attributes that are necessary to His Essence. By *Asmā'*, Sufis do not mean the words such as 'eternal' or 'all-knowing', and so on. Rather, the intent is the meaning these Names represent, in the same way that the Attributes are not something extra to God's Essence.
>
> *Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, Asfār-i Arba'ah 3, AAS p.59, in FLI p.95*

The Sufi concept is that the boundless, formless, unmanifested Essence *(al-Dhāt)* of God projects certain realities *(ḥaqā'iq)* called the divine Names. The divine Names then project the divine Attributes, which, in turn, project all the levels of the creation down to the physical plane.

The divine Names are called the Supreme Fathers *(Ābā' al-'Ulwīyah)*, because they bring into being *al-'Aql al-Awwal* (Primal Intelligence), the creative Power from which all creation comes into being. Hence, the divine Names are called the First Cause, while *al-'Aql al-Awwal* is called the First Caused. As the First Cause, the divine Names are the first stirrings of the creative impulse within the Godhead. They are the creative Father formed by the highest, sublime, divine Essence *(al-Dhāt)* within Himself, to carry out the task of creating and maintaining the creation.

Names of God are also used as a means to focus or concentrate the mind in Sufi spiritual practice *(dhikr)*.

See also: **Allāh** (2.1), **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná** (2.1), **dhikr** (▸2).

1. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* I:2841, *MJR2* p.155.
2. In *MJR7* p.176.

asmā' al-dhātīyah (A), **asmā'-yi źātī** (P) *Lit.* essential *(dhātīyah, źātī)* names *(asmā')*; essential names of God. In common usage, a categorization of the ninety-nine names of *Allāh* into those names considered essentially a part of the Divine, as opposed to the names of attributes only sometimes manifest.

For the Muslim theologian, the ninety-nine names of *Allāh* are categorized in various ways. Names describing certain qualities of God are called 'essential *(dhātī, źātī)*' and others 'attributive *(ṣifātī)*'. The 'essential' or 'substantive' names are those that seem more essentially a part of His nature, those that always characterize Him; qualities such as eternity, oneness, omniscience, life, power, will, hearing and seeing are seen as always being a part of His nature. The *ṣifātī* names relate to aspects He sometimes manifests or things He sometimes does.

The names of His essential Attributes *(asmā' al-Ṣifāt al-dhātīyah)* are distinguished from the names of power *(asmā' al-ṣifāt al-jalālīyah)*, the names of beauty *(asmā' al-ṣifāt al-jamālīyah)* and the mixed names *(asmā' al-ṣifāt al-mushtarakah)*. The eight essential aspects of the Divine are given as:[1]

Ḥayāt	Life	He is ever living *(al-Ḥayy)*.
'Ilm	Knowledge	He is all-knowing *(al-'Alīm)*.
Sam'	Hearing	He is all-hearing *(al-Samī')*.
Baṣar	Sight	He is all-seeing *(al-Baṣīr)*.
Irādah	Will	All will is His.

Qudrah	Power	All power is His.
Takwīn	Generating	All existence and actions depend upon Him.
Kalām	Word	All that is said and taught is His.

These are quintessential aspects of God's being: He is always all-knowing, all-seeing, all-hearing and so on.

When mystics speak of the *Ism al-dhātī* (*lit.* essential Name) of God, they mean *al-Ism al-A'ẓam* (the Greatest Name), which cannot be spoken, written or read. This is the divine Power emanating from God, and permeating the entire creation. Developing the inner faculties of perception *(ḥawāss-i dil)* in order to experience this Name is the objective of higher mystical practices.

See also: **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná** (2.1), **al-Dhāt**, **ṣifah**.

1. *cf.* Shaykh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti, *The Most Beautiful Names, MBN* pp.5–6.

bhed(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* distinction, difference; hence, duality; also, disagreement, breach, rupture. The principal point upon which the various schools of Vedantic philosophy differ is the relationship between the soul and God. Some state that there is a difference *(bheda)* between the soul and God; some say that there is no difference *(abheda);* and others suggest various forms and gradations in between *(bhedabheda).*

The doctrine of 'identity in difference' is known in *Vedānta* as *bhedabhedavāda.* The system is said to have originated with Auḍulomi, mentioned in the *Brahma Sūtras,*[1] but whose writings are no longer extant. They are referred to by the chief exponent of the doctrine, Bhāskara (C9th). The other exponents of this doctrine are Nimbārka (*c.*C11th) and Yādavaprakāsha (C11th), for some time the *guru* of Rāmānuja.

According to the doctrine of Bhāskara, oneness and multiplicity are equally real. *Brahman* in His causal state is transcendental, but in His aspect as effect, He has become both the manifested universe as well as the individual soul. Individual souls are neither absolutely different from God nor absolutely identical to Him. In the state of bondage – ignorance – they are different. In the state of liberation, they are one with Him.[2]

There are subtle differences between the exponents of this doctrine. Bhāskara believes that the individual soul is a part of (not one with) *Brahman* as long as it is in a state of ignorance. It becomes one with *Brahman* only in the state of emancipation. And that is possible only after death. Nimbārka believes that the *jīva* is a part of *Brahman,* and also one with Him, both in the state of ignorance and in that of knowledge and emancipation. Further, the latter can be attained while living.

According to Madhva (*c.*1197–1276 CE), the principal exponent of the dualistic school *(Dvaita),* there are three eternally separate and existent entities: God, the soul and matter. The soul and matter are dependent upon and subordinate to God, but are nevertheless real and eternal. Madhva thus identifies five forms of difference between God, souls and matter:

> Madhva speaks of five forms of difference *(bheda)*, namely, the difference between God and souls, between souls and souls, between God and matter, between souls and matter, and lastly between one material object and another. But both souls and the universe are dependent upon God, and are guided by His will. God is immanent in the world and controls it from within. It should be stated, however, that Madhva's system is not pluralistic in the ordinary sense of the term, for he says that there is only one independent entity, and not many. Nothing but God exists in its own right. The possessor of all excellent qualities, He is unknowable to the senses. He cannot even be completely known through scriptural revelation.
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, The Upanishads, U2 p.24*

See also: **abheda**.

1. *Brahma Sūtras* 1:4.21, 3:4.45, 4:4.6.
2. See Swāmī Prabhavānanda, *Spiritual Heritage of India, SHI* pp.299–300.

Dhāt, al-, Dhāt al-Allāh (A), **Źāt, Źāt-i Allāh, Źāt-i Khudā** (P) *Lit.* the essence *(dhāt);* the essential reality, nature or truth of something, as distinguished from a quality or attribute; hence, in Sufism, the divine Essence; used to translate the Greek, *Ousia,* and the Latin, *Essentia. Dhāt al-Allāh* and *Źāt-i Khudā* mean God's Essence and are used interchangeably with *al-Dhāt.* The adjectival form of *dhāt* is *dhātī.*

Al-Dhāt is considered to be a higher reality than the divine Names *(Asmā')* or the divine Attributes *(Ṣifāt).* It is the absolute Reality itself. Al-Jīlī writes:

> The Essence *(al-Dhāt)* denotes absolute Being stripped of all modes, relations and aspects. Not that they are outside of absolute Being; on the contrary, they belong to it, but they are neither as themselves nor as aspects of it; no, they are identical with the being of the Absolute. The Absolute is the simple Essence in which no name or quality or relation is manifested.
>
> *Al-Jīlī, al-Insān al-Kāmil 1:61.4ff., in SIM p.95 (n.1)*

Similarly, the modern scholar W.C. Chittick writes:

> In Islamic theology and metaphysics a distinction is made between God in Himself, or the divine Essence *(al-Dhāt),* and God as He describes Himself in revelation. Thus, in the *Qur'ān,* God calls Himself by many Names, such as the Merciful, the All-Knowing, the Living, the All-Powerful. From these Names *(Asmā'),* we understand that He possesses the Attributes *(Ṣifāt)* of Mercy, Knowledge, Life and Power. But what is God in Himself, in His very Essence? That is beyond our grasp. Hence the Muslims distinguish between God's Essence on the one hand and His Names and Attributes on the other.
>
> *W.C. Chittick, Sufi Path of Love, SPL p.42*

'Ināyat Khān attempts to define *Źāt:*

> Before manifestation what existed? *Źāt,* the truly Existing, the only Being. In what form? In no form. As what? As nothing. The only definition that words can give it is as the Absolute. In Sufi terms, this existence is termed *aḥadīyat.*
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK1 p.111*

Aḥadīyat means oneness, absolute and all-encompassing, which negates the possibility of any 'otherness'. *Aḥadīyat* is the name of a plane of consciousness, the state of absolute oneness that is even above the origin of the *Logos.*

In Sufi terms, *Dhāt* is a higher essence than the 'personal God' called Lord, Creator or the Merciful One. 'Lord' implies also that there is also that over which He rules; 'Creator' implies that there is also that which He created; the 'Merciful One' implies that there is that over which He can exercise His mercy. *Dhāt* is absolute Oneness, while the Speaker of the Creative Word that brings the creation into existence is *wāḥidīyah,* the oneness that includes the multiplicity of creation. At the plane of consciousness called *wāḥidīyah,* the Oneness divides itself into Creator and created, Beloved and lover, the All-Merciful and that over which mercy is exercised. Above this level, the divinity cannot be called Lord, Creator and so on, for there is nothing other, and names which imply relationship have no meaning. There is no lover and beloved, but only Love itself.

In 'Irāqī's terms, *Dhāt* is Love, and he uses these terms interchangeably. Love divides itself into Beloved and lover, so that it can see itself in the mirror of the lover (a reflection that shines forth with longing and need) and in the mirror of Beloved (a reflection that shines forth with beauty, perfection and power). But neither the lover nor Beloved are the true Reality; Love itself is the reality.[1]

Ibn 'Arabī, and many other Sufis after him, call this unmanifested Essence, 'Being *(Wujūd)*'. 'Ināyat Khān calls it "Life Absolute":

> The Life Absolute from which has sprung all that is felt, seen and perceived, and into which all again merges in time, is a silent, motionless and eternal life which among the Sufis is called *Źāt.*
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK2 p.13*

Rūmī says that because man cannot perceive the Essence of God, he looks towards His attributes or manifestations:

> Since you have not the endurance for His Essence *(Źāt),*
> turn your eyes toward the attributes.
> Since you do not see the Directionless,
> behold His light in the directions.
>
> *Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz 386:4106, KSD1 p.227, KDS1 p.185, in SPL p.44*

He also says that the intellect can never understand "God's Essence":

> No created being is without connection to Him,
> but that connection is indescribable, O uncle!
> For within the spirit is no separation or joining,
> but thought cannot conceive of other than these two....
> How should the intellect find its way to this connection?
> For it is in bondage to separation and joining.
> Hence, Muḥammad counselled us,
> "Do not investigate God's Essence *(Źāt-i Khudā)!*"
> That which can be conceived concerning His Essence *(Źāt)* –
> that in reality is not with a view toward His Essence *(Źāt).*
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:3695–96, 3699–3701; cf. MJR4 p.475, in SPL p.44*

See also: **ṣifah**.

1. 'Irāqī, *Divine Flashes* 1, 3, 7, *DF* pp.72–73, 77, 84–87.

dhunātmak (H), **dhunātmik** (Pu), **dhvanyātmaka** (S) *Lit.* composed of *(ātmak)* sound *(dhvani)* or melody *(dhun);* made up of sound; the inner or mystic reality as opposed to the *varṇātmak* or outer reality. *Dhunātmak* refers to the inner experience of contact with the primal, divine Sound, while *varṇātmak* is the outer spoken or written description or an outer reflected reality.

Everything, whether mystical or mundane, has two aspects. There is the experience of that thing and the description of that experience. Words are at best only descriptions of experiences. They are not the experiences themselves. This is more readily understandable with mundane objects: the word 'orange' is clearly not the orange itself, for example. However, because few

people are aware of the existence of mystic experience, there is often confusion in mystical and religious spheres between the experience and the description. The expression of this truth is a common refrain in mystical writings. Dariyā Sāhib, for instance, wrote:

> When an object is named,
> it is expressed in letters.
> But when that object in itself is seen,
> no letter is perceived therein.
>
> *Dariyā Sāhib, Nirbhay Gyān, NG p.3; cf. DSSB p.274*

Religious books and scriptures, where they contain the writings of the mystics, consist of the description of a reality which can be experienced. They are thus *varṇātmak* and are meant solely as a guide and an inspiration to people to seek the inner mystic or *dhunātmak* experience. However, when this is lost sight of, the writings become an end in themselves and people make intellectual and theological interpretations of those teachings, forming religious belief systems. The aim then becomes almost entirely that of belief in these various interpretations. The *dhunātmak* reality to which the writings actually point is thus forgotten.

It is the confusion between the outward verbal descriptions and the inner mystical experience that has often led academic or theologically minded translators to miss the real meaning in mystical writings. One of the commonest errors is to confuse the mystic Word of God, the primal creative Power that manifests and maintains the entire creation, with the written message or description of that Word. John's gospel, for instance, begins:

> In the beginning was the Word *(Logos),*
> and the Word *(Logos)* was with God,
> and the Word *(Logos)* was God.
>
> *John 1:1, KJV*

It is clear that no written words can be identified with God Himself ("the Word was God"). Though many throughout history have understood that the Word refers to God's creative Power, the majority have equated it with the written word without giving it further consideration.

Again, the sacred writings of most religions in the world state that a person should love or worship the *name* of God. On the face of it, this seems strange, for how can a person love a name? It is the person named who is loved. But in mystical writings, it is clearly stated that human beings should love the 'name' of God. The mystery is resolved when it is realized that the true Name of God is a mystical reality. It is another term for the Word. And only something which can be experienced can be actively loved and desired.

The true Name is thus *dhunātmak* in nature, while the words which describe it are *varṇātmak*. In fact, mystics have drawn a distinction between the *dhunātmak Nām* and the *varṇātmak nām*. The former refers to the mystical Power that creates and supports the creation, the latter refers to the written or spoken names of God.

See also: **dhunātmak Nām** (3.1), **varṇātmak nām**.

Durrat al-Bayḍā', al- (A), **Durrah-'i Bayżā'** (P) *Lit.* the White *(Bayḍā')* Pearl *(Durrah);* the Pearl of Light. Islamic mystics and philosophers have said that all the manifold forms of creation originated from one, single, undifferentiated 'Substance'. Metaphorically, that 'Substance' is called the White Pearl *(al-Durrat al-Bayḍā')*.

In Sufi technical terms, the White Pearl has been associated with various mystical realities. It is generally equated with *al-Nūr al-Muḥammadīyah* (the Light of Muḥammad), the Light emanating from God as the divine creative power. According to Nicholson, the White Pearl is an image for the single, simple 'substance' out of which divine Mercy *(al-Raḥmān)* manifested the creation. Similarly, the White Pearl is often equated with the Reality of Realities or *Logos (Ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqā'iq),* which is also equivalent to the First Intelligence *(al-'Aql al-Awwal),* and Universal Reason *(al-'Aql al-Kullī).*[1]

Alluding to this White Pearl as the "one substance" out of which the many have arisen, Rūmī says:

> Simple we were and all one substance:
> we were all without head and without foot yonder.
> We were one substance like the sun:
> we were knotless and pure, like water.
> When that goodly Light took form,
> it became many in number like the shadows of a battlement.
> Raze the battlement with the *manjanīq* (mangonel, a rock hurler),
> that difference may vanish from amidst this company of shadows.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:686–89; cf. MJR2 p.39*

See also: **pearl** (3.1).

1. R.A. Nicholson, *Commentary on Maśnavī* I:686, *MJR7* p.62; see also *MJR8* p.3.

Emet (He) *Lit.* Truth; an aspect of God, referring to what is eternally true and real.

See also: **al-Ḥaqīqah, sat, Truth.**

Ḥaqīqah, al- (A), **Ḥaqīqat** (P) (pl. *ḥaqā'iq*) *Lit.* the Truth, the Reality; the Essence. In common usage, *ḥaqīqah* means the true state of affairs, the facts. In a mundane sense, *ḥaqīqatan* is used to mean: in reality, in fact, actually, indeed, truly.

Ḥaqīqah, the essential Reality, is sometimes contrasted with *majāz* (metaphor). This world is a *majāz* of reality – a metaphor, a reflection, a sign. The actuality, the Reality *(Ḥaqīqah)* is God; the physical creation is a many-faceted reflection *(majāz)* of that Reality. The thirteenth-century Persian mystic, Sa'dī, says that the person whose attention remains superficial, satisfied with this entertaining *majāz,* misses the reality. At death, he will regret the missed opportunity:

> Tomorrow, when Reality *(Ḥaqīqat)* is at hand,
> the traveller who has acted superficially will be ashamed.
>
> *Sa'dī, in FN13 p.22, in SSE3 p.24*

Ḥaqīqah is related to *ḥaqq* (truth, reality). In some usages, a subtle distinction is made between the two. *Al-Ḥaqq* means the True, the Real (God). *Ḥaqīqah* is used to mean the 'Reality' projected from *al-Ḥaqq*. *Ḥaqīqah* is associated with the level of the Godhead just below *al-Ḥaqq,* a plane of pure spirituality, eternal and unchanging. Sufis spoke of this first emanation from *al-Ḥaqq* in several ways. This *Ḥaqīqah* (Reality) is called the First Cause, a power brought into being directly and unmediated from *al-Ḥaqq* (the Truth) or *al-Dhāt* (the Essence). This First Cause then brings into being the First Caused, also called the First Intelligence *(al-'Aql al-Awwal).* The expression *Ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqā'iq* (the Reality of realities), although commonly used to refer to the highest Essence, is also used in some systems for the First Cause. This varied use of terms is characteristic of Sufi literature.

Ḥaqīqah (Reality) is sometimes likened to the kernel *(lubb,* pl. *albāb)* or essence of a nut. The *Qur'ān* speaks of *ūlū al-albāb,* wise men who know the essence of things.[1] Hence the Sufi adage, "To get at the kernel, you must break the shell." The shell is the external side of religion, the *sharī'ah* or religious law. It is also the external world. The kernel is the *Ḥaqīqah,* the universal and eternal Truth that transcends human limitations and everything that is transitory.

In Sufi usage, the plural form, *ḥaqā'iq* (the realities, the archetypes, the essences), is often used. The *ḥaqā'iq* are parallel to the divine Names *(Asmā').* These are the Supreme Fathers *(Ābā' al-'Ulwīyah)* that bring into being the First Caused, out of which comes all creation below.

In some usages, the *ḥaqā'iq* refer to divine or subtle archetypes found in

the higher planes, everything in this creation being manifested as a projection of these *ḥaqā'iq*.

See also: **ḥaqq** (▸2), **al-Ḥaqq** (2.1), **majāz** (▸2), **sat**, **Truth**.

1. *e.g. Qur'ān* 3:190, 39:18, 40:54.

hast, hastī (P) (pl. *hastī'hā*) *Lit.* existence; from the root *hastan* (to exist, to be); refers both to that which exists eternally, as well as to material existence, depending on the context.

Hast or *hastī* is contrasted with *nīst* or *nīstī* (nonexistence). In some contexts, *hast* is that which is real and permanent, though hidden from sensory perception. *Nīst* is unreal and impermanent; though manifest to the senses as the phenomenal world, it has no eternal existence. Rūmī advises seeking the Real in order "to be safe from harm":

> If you desire to be safe from harm,
> close your eye to the beginning and contemplate the end,
> that you may regard all apparent nonentities
> as really existent *(hast)*,
> and look upon all entities perceived by the senses,
> as of low degree.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:1360–61, MJR6 p.334*

The problem is that this phenomenal world seems very real, while the Unseen *(al-Ghayb)*, the inner realms ascending to the level of God Himself, seem quite unreal. True existence seems unreal, when in fact it is real. Rūmī says:

> This world of nonexistence *(nīst)*
> seems like real Existence *(Hast)*;
> While that world of real Existence *(Hast)*
> has become deeply hidden.
> The dust is on the wind: it is playing,
> it is making a false show and forming a veil.
> This which seems so busy is really idle, and but a husk;
> That which is hidden is its core and origin.
>
> The dust is as a tool in the hand of the wind:
> deem the wind high and of high descent.
> The gaze of the eye of dust falls on the dust:
> an eye that sees the wind is of another sort.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:1280–84; cf. MJR2 p.287*

The "eye of dust", the eye that is made of flesh, sees only the phenomenal world, which is cloudy and unclear like dust being blown around by the wind. The eye that sees the wind itself is the faculty of inner vision, awakened by mystic practice.

The two terms *hastī* and *nīstī* are also used with a reversed meaning. In these instances, *hastī* (existence) refers to existence in the realm of manifested phenomena. *Nīstī* (Nonexistence) is the realm of Reality, pure Being or God, where the diversity of the creation is lost in the oneness of God. Here, Rūmī also uses two synonyms *'Adam* (Nonexistence) and *vujūd* (existence):

> Turn back from existence *(hast)* towards Nonexistence *(Nīstī),*
> if you seek the Lord and belong to the Lord.
> This Nonexistence *('Adam)* is the place of income:
> do not flee from it;
> This existence *(vujūd)* of more and less is the place of expenditure.
> Since God's workshop is Nonexistence *(Nīstī),*
> outside of the workshop there is only worthlessness.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:688–90, MJR2 p.257*

Nīstī or *'Adam* as the "place of income" is the source of all abundance and real sustenance; *hast* or *vujūd* as the "place of expenditure" is where the soul spends all it has. Rūmī is advising the seeker of spirituality to turn towards real sustenance and away from the evanescent world.

In another passage, Rūmī says that the realm of Nonexistence *(Nīstī)* is a broad and ample "expanse", while the realm of material existence *(hastī)* is a narrow "cramped prison":

> O God, reveal to the soul that place
> where speech is growing without words,
> that the pure soul may fly headlong
> towards the far-stretching expanse of Nonexistence *('Adam);*
> An expanse very ample and spacious,
> and from it, this fantasy and being *(hast)* (of ours) is fed.
>
> (The realm of) fantasies is narrower than Nonexistence *('Adam):*
> on that account, fantasy is the cause of pain.
> (The realm of actual) existence *(hastī),*
> is narrower still than (the realm of) fantasy:
> Hence, in it, full moons become crescents.
> Again, the existence *(hastī)* of the world of sense and colour
> is narrower than this, for it is a cramped prison.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:3092–97; cf. MJR2 pp.168–69, in SPL p.251*

Although, in these instances, the usage of *hast* and *nīst* is reversed, the essential meaning is the same. Mystics point out, in one way or another, that only the Divine is truly real. Phenomenal existence is, by comparison, unreal:

> We and our existences *(hastī'hā)* are really nonexistences:
> You are the absolute Being *(vujūd-i muṭlaq)* who manifests the perishable.
> We are all lions, but lions on a banner:
> because of the wind, they appear to be continually rushing onward....
> Our wind (whereby we are moved) and our being are Your gift;
> Our entire existence *(hastī)* originates from Your bringing us into being.
> You showed the delightfulness of Being *(Hastī)* unto nonbeing *(nīst)*,
> after You had caused nonbeing *(nīst)* to fall in love with You.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī 1:602–3, 605–6; cf. MJR2 p.35*

The loss of individual existence in the existence of the Divine is a frequent theme in the *Maśnavī* and other Sufi writings. Rūmī says:

> Since the idol is Thy face,
> idolatry is sweeter;
> Since the wine comes from Thy cup,
> drunkenness is sweeter.
> I have been so annihilated in Thy Love's existence *(hastī-'i 'ishq)*
> that my nonexistence *(nīstī)* is a thousand times sweeter
> than my existence *(hastī)*.
>
> *Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz, Rubā'īyāt 904, KSD8 p.153; cf. in SPL pp.297–98*

And:

> Since existence is to be found in Nonexistence *(Nīstī)*,
> while nothing exists in existence *(hastī)*,
> a fire entered the spirit and consumed its existence *(hast)*.
>
> *Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz 68:807, KSD1 p.48, KDS1 p.75, in SPL p.175*

In fact, since the intention of mystic practice *(dhikr, źikr)* is the loss of individual existence *(hastī)*, Rūmī goes so far as to say that *dhikr* performed with awareness of one's own existence is a sin:

> This uttering of praise (to Him)
> is really the omission of praise on my part,
> for it is a proof of my being *(hastī)*,
> and being *(hastī)* is a sin.

It behoves us to be nonbeing *(nīst)*
in the presence of His Being *(Hast):*
In His presence what is our being *(hastī)?* –
blind and blue.

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:517–18; cf. MJR2 p.31

Ultimately, however, the Reality of God is beyond all notions of *hastī* and *nīstī*. Both "perish", Rūmī says, "before His face", but he goes on to praise "existence *(hastī)* in Nonexistence *(Nīstī)*", meaning the eternal life enjoyed by the seeker on dying to the self:

The reflections that are seeking the Light
become nothing when His Light appears.
How can reason remain when He bids it go?
"Everything is perishing except His face."[1]
Before His face the existent *(hast)*
and the nonexistent *(nīst)* perish:
Existence *(hastī)* in Nonexistence *(Nīstī)*
is in sooth a marvellous thing!
In this place of presence, all minds are lost beyond control;
When the pen reaches this point, it breaks.

Rūmī, Maśnavī III:4660–63; cf. MJR4 p.260

See also: **'adam**, **al-Ghayb** (4.1).

1. *Qur'ān* 28:88.

hsū (xū) (C) *Lit.* vacuity, void; the state of ultimate Reality; not totally devoid or empty, but existing as a deep and profound yet inexhaustible Source of creative potentiality; a non-differentiated field of energy or life force that expresses itself in the myriad forms of creation.

Lăo Tzu uses a number of metaphors to describe this creative void. It is, he says, "like a bellows". It is from this space or formlessness that all things are created. Yet it is never depleted, and all things return to this formlessness:

The space between Heaven and Earth –
is it not like a bellows?
It is empty *(hsū)* and yet not depleted;
Move it, and more (always) comes out.

Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 5, LTTC p.196

He also describes it as a valley *(kŭ):*

> The valley *(kŭ)* spirit never dies;
> We call it the mysterious female.
> The gates of the mysterious female –
> these we call the roots of Heaven and Earth.
> Subtle yet everlasting! It seems to exist.
> In being used, it is not exhausted.
>
> *Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 6, LTTC p.58*

Three aspects of *hsū* are described: *T'ài Hsū, hsū hsīn* and *hsū chí.*

1. *T'ài Hsū* is used for the Supreme Void, an expression for the transcendent or formless aspect of *Tào. Hsū* by itself is used to describe both the metaphysical and worldly aspects of void; *T'ài Hsū* always denotes its strictly metaphysical nature.

2. *Hsū hsīn* relates to the human aspect of void, for it literally means 'voidness of heart' or true humility. In this context, *hsū* is used to describe that state of being in which purity, clarity and peace are experienced, in which a person is literally 'void', empty or free of all disturbances of incoming impressions from the external world. This state of consciousness with its own vital energy has no place for ego-based desires or worries of any sort, since it represents positive receptivity to and absorption in *Tào.*

3. *Hsū chí* literally means 'utmost vacuity'; a state of consciousness that must be obtained by anyone who wishes to return to his source of being. As a state of mind, Lăo Tzu advocates a return to the original state of all things. In so doing, a person can achieve a state of transcendent consciousness, while living in the immanent world of confusion and conflict:

> Attain utmost vacuity *(hsū chí);*
> Hold fast to quietude.
> While the myriad things are stirring together,
> I see only their return.
> For luxuriantly as they grow,
> each of them will return to its root.
>
> *Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 16, SCT p.54*

See also: **kŭ**, **shūnyatā**, **Tào**.

hsüán (xuán) (C) *Lit.* mysterious, abstruse; that which is mystical and profound, an indiscernible richness of spirit. *Hsüán* is the great cosmic mystery that

integrates both latent and active energy forces, and whose source may be found in the state of vacuity *(hsū)* and, ultimately, *Tào.* In the first chapter of the *Tào Té Chīng,* Lǎo Tzu tries to depict the nature of that which is mystical and mysterious. He says that both the named and the unnamed, the manifest and the unmanifest, issue forth from *hsüán,* the subtle and profound mystery of *Tào:*

> *Tào* can be talked about, but not the eternal *Tào:*
> names can be named, but not the eternal name.
>
> As the origin of the ten thousand things,
> It is the nameless;
> As the mother of the ten thousand things,
> It is the named....
>
> These two flow from the same source,
> though differently named;
> And both are called mysteries *(hsüán).*
> The mystery of mysteries is the door of all essence.
>
> *Lǎo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 1; cf. TTCW p.3*

Hsüán was also the name given to a school of metaphysics based on Taoism called *Hsüán Hsüéh* (*lit.* mystical learning), later known as Neo-Taoism, which flourished in China from the third to the fifth century CE. Students of this school engaged in a practice known as *ch'īng t'án* (pure discussions) on transcendental matters.

See also: **Tào**.

ism (A/P) (pl. *asmā'*). *Lit.* name; a general term for any name; also used in Islam as a reference to any of the many names of *Allāh.*

See also: **asmā', al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná** (2.1).

kṛitrim nām (H), **kirtam nām** (Pu) *Lit.* artificial *(kṛitrim)* name *(nām);* a given name, a descriptive name, an acquired name; a name or epithet given according to the activities or attributes of something or some person. For instance, *Gopāl* (the cowherd) and *Girdhārī* (one who supports a mountain) are names given to Kṛishṇa who – according to the legend – looked after cows and lifted the Govardhana mountain. The term is also applied to those names given to God according to His attributes such as *Dayāl* (the Merciful).

All verbal names are *kṛitrim,* because they are all given in some language or another. The mystic 'Name' or Word of God, however, is a name of another kind and may be described as a real or true Name. This distinction is made in the *Ādi Granth:*

> My tongue utters Thine acquired names *(kirtam nām):*
> the true Name *(Sat Nām)* is Thy primal and ancient Name.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1083, MMS*

See also: **varṇātmak nām**.

kŭ (gŭ) (C) *Lit.* valley, gully; in the *Tào Té Chīng,* an area that appears hollowed out or empty; used metaphorically in Taoist literature as an image for the creative void, the seeming emptiness of Nonbeing from which *Tào* gives rise to the entire cosmos. *Kŭ* is also used synonymously with the term *hsṻ* (void); hence, the allied term, *kŭ shén* (*lit.* valley spirit), can also mean 'spirit of the void'. Both *kŭ* and *hsṻ* are used to illustrate that *Tào,* though unseen, gives rise to and permeates the entire cosmos. Lăo Tzu says:

> The spiritual reality of the void *(kŭ shén)*
> never ceases to exist.
> We call it the mystery of passivity.
> The entry to the mystery of passivity
> is the origin of the universe.
> Unceasing, it always remains.
> Drawn upon, it is never exhausted.
>
> *Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 6, TNWT p.8*

And again:

> *Tào* in enlightenment seems obscure;
> *Tào* in progress seems regressive;
> *Tào* in Its straightness seems rugged.
> The highest virtue seems like a valley *(kŭ)*....
> *Tào,* while hidden, is nameless.
> Yet it is *Tào* alone that is good at imparting and completing.
>
> *Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 41, TTCT p.56*

See also: **hsṻ**, **Tào**.

laksh (H/Pu), **lakshya** (S) *Lit.* visible, observable, perceptible; hence, target, goal, objective, direction; thus, the thing itself; that which is actually signi-

fied as opposed to what is only said or spoken about it (*vāch,* words); mystically, the inner, esoteric Reality of which words can only be indicators.

Lakshya can be used to mean the target or object of concentration, either in meditation or in other activities. It is the essence or goal motivating the endeavour, as in the *Upanishads,* where the target – the thing itself – is *Brahman:*

> Taking the great weapon of the *Upanishads* as the bow,
> place in it an arrow sharpened by meditation.
> Then, dear friend, drawing it with a mind
> made one-pointed by contemplation of That,
> strike the target *(lakshya)* of the Imperishable.
> *Praṇava (i.e. Om)* is the bow, *ātman* is the arrow,
> and *Brahman* is the target *(lakshya)*
> to be struck by a one-pointed mind.
> Then, the *ātman* will become one with *Brahman,*
> as an arrow with the target *(lakshya).*
>
> *Muṇḍaka Upanishad 2:2.3–4*

Laksh, as the thing itself, is contrasted with *vāch,* which signifies that which is spoken, written or read about that thing. Thus, the names given by a *guru* to a disciple to concentrate the mind in meditation are names that can be spoken, written or read, and are therefore called *vāch* or *varṇātmak nām* (*lit.* lettered name). But their underlying and true purport or what they esoterically signify is the true, unutterable Name *(i.e. dhunātmak Nām),* which cannot be spoken, written or read, and which is therefore called *laksh.* Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes:

> I have explained the distinction
> between *varṇātmak* and *dhunātmak.*
> They are called *vāch* and *laksh.*
> Know *vāch* to be *varṇātmak,*
> and *laksh* to be *dhunātmak.*
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 10:1.18–19, SBP pp.94–95*

See also: **vāch**.

lubb, al- (A/P) (pl. *albāb*) *Lit.* the kernel, the quintessence; the essence of something; the innermost heart; the innermost kernel of the heart; metaphorically, the absolute Truth. Hence the Sufi adage, "To get at the kernel *(lubb),* you must break the shell," implying that this world, including the external forms of religion, is a shell, hiding the kernel of Reality, which is God. Sufis also

describe the levels of mystic ascent as *ṣadr* (breast), *qalb* (heart), *fu'ād* (inner heart) and *lubb* (innermost kernel of the heart).

In a number of places, the *Qur'ān* speaks of those with spiritual understanding as *ūlū al-albāb* (*lit.* men of the kernel, men of understanding):

> He giveth wisdom unto whom He will,
> and unto whom wisdom is given,
> he truly hath received abundant good.
> But none remember except men of understanding *(ūlū al-albāb).*
>
> *Qur'ān 2:269, MGK*

Those souls who are destined to return to God are known as the possessors of the kernels. Quoting and commenting on *Qur'ān,* Ibn 'Arabī says:

> "Only those who possess the kernels remember."[1] This verse tells us that they knew, then forgetfulness overcame some of them. Some of them continue to be ruled by the property of forgetfulness. "They forgot God, so He forgot them."[2] Others are reminded and remember. These are the "possessors of the kernels".
>
> The "kernel *(al-lubb)*" of the rational faculty is that which becomes the food of the rational thinkers. So the "possessors of the kernels" are those who employ reason as it should be employed, in contrast to the "men of rational faculties" who are the people of the shell *(al-qishr).* They have missed the kernel, while the possessors of kernels have seized it.
>
> *Ibn 'Arabī, Meccan Revelations 3:120.32, in SPK p.238*

As Ibn 'Arabī emphasizes, this kernel is far beyond ordinary human rational intellect. Those who "employ reason as it should be employed" are those who use the intellect to pierce through the intellect to the kernel. Rūmī uses a similar word *(maghz)* to say that this innermost kernel is love itself:

> Love is the kernel *(maghz),* the world the shell;
> Love is the sweetmeat, the world the cauldron.
>
> *Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz 2104:22225, KSD4 p.291, KDS2 p.788, in SPL p.198*

1. *Qur'ān* 39:9.
2. *Qur'ān* 9:67.

mabda' wa-ma'ād (A), **mabda'-u ma'ād** (P) *Lit.* returning *(ma'ād)* to the point of beginning *(mabda').* In Sufi terminology, *mabda' wa-ma'ād* implies that God is both the beginning and the end. Everything arises from Him, and

everything dissolves back into Him. The divine creative power is both an emanation from Him that creates the creation and also a power of attraction *(jadhbah)* drawing souls back to Him. The act of creation described in Sufi terms is manifestation *(tajalliyāt),* emanation *(ẓuhūr)* or effusion *(fayḍ),* and this is the outward flow of that divine Power into the creation. The spiritual journey of the soul is the return journey to Him by means of that same divine Power. The expression is derived from the *Qur'ān,* which uses verb forms of *ma'ād* and *mabda':*

> It is *Allāh* who begins *(yabda'u)* (the process of) creation;
> Then repeats it *(yu'īduhu);*
> Then shall you be brought back to Him.
>
> *Qur'ān 30:11; cf. AYA*

mir'āt al-Ḥaḍrat, mir'āt al-Kawn, mir'āt al-Wujūd (A), **mir'āt-i Ḥażrat, mir'āt-i Kawn, mir'āt-i Vujūd** (P) *Lit.* the mirror *(mir'āt)* of the Presence *(Ḥaḍrat);* the mirror of Existence *(Kawn);* the mirror of Being *(Wujūd);* the mirror of the real Being; terms used to express the idea that the created universe is a mirror of the Divine. Mystics say that *al-Wujūd* (the Being) is the Reality, and all that is seen in the creation is a mere reflection. To the mystic seeker, it also means that everything in the creation reflects God's Glory.

musammá (A/P) *Lit.* the object named, the thing named, as opposed to *ism,* the name. Mystics differentiate between direct, personal experience of the divine, inner Reality and the names and words that describe it. Doctrinal conflicts between schools, sects or religions are always about descriptions of Reality, not about Reality itself.

People generally act as though the names, in and of themselves, were of great importance. Mystics point out that where there is a name, there is also the *musammá,* the object named. They say that the scriptures record the actual experience of Saints or prophets. It is not the name that is important, but the subtle, spiritual experience – the *musammá.* The way to reach the thing named *(musammá)* is not through a study of names and words, but by direct experience of the thing named, of God:

> Have you ever come across a name *(ism)*
>   without the thing itself?
> Have you ever plucked a rose *(gul)*
>   from the letters *gāf* and *lām* of the word *gul?*
> You have pronounced the name *(ism):*
>   go, seek the named *(musammá).*

Know that the moon is on high,
not (its reflection) in the water of the stream.
Rūmī, Maśnavī I:3456–57; cf. MJR2 p.188

See also: **asmā'**.

Nāṣīrūtha (Md) A Mandaean term with no real equivalent English translation; commonly understood by the Mandaeans to refer to the teachings of their religion; also, the secret knowledge of the Mandaean priests, also called the Nāṣoraeans, a name derived from the same root as *Nāṣīrūtha;* however, it is recognized in the priesthood that one who has truly understood or experienced *Nāṣīrūtha* is very rare; thus, *Nāṣīrūtha* is also enlightenment, the mystic *gnosis* of Reality. In some of the more ancient Mandaean poems, it is also clear that *Nāṣīrūtha* refers to the Creative Word. Possibly the best English term to use in translation – one which also has a wide and general spread of meaning – would be 'Truth'.

These meanings are evident in the Mandaean literature. Speaking of the divine Source as the "Wellspring", one text says:

This is the Wellspring from which *Nāṣīrūtha* emanated,
and was distributed among the *shkinata* (inner regions).
She convinced '*uthras* (pure beings),
and drew kings (priests) to *Nāṣīrūtha* within their minds.
Thousand and Twelve Questions II:310; cf. TTQ p.266

In another, *Nāṣīrūtha* is the fruit of the Tree of Life, the true "Vine", planted in the eternal realm, the "land of the True". Shītil is Seth, third son of Adam, one of the mythical Mandaean Saviours.

Shītil has a Vine yonder in you, Land of the True,
laden with reward, laden with oblation,
and laden with *Nāṣīrūtha.*
The tendrils that curl at the leaf ends
bear prayers, hymns and sublime recitations.
Mandaean Prayer Book 212; cf. CPM p.181

Another poem speaks of *Nāṣīrūtha* as the source of the "First Word" from whom all realms *(shkinata)* and rulers *('uthras)* draw their power:

On beholding the First Word,
the '*uthras* (spirits) and *shkinata* (dwellings)
all rose from their thrones,
and addressed a hymn to him, saying to him:

"Our Father! The Guardian of Truth *(Kūshṭā)* has blessed you,
and the *Nāṣīrūtha* from which you came into being has blessed you."

Mandaean Prayer Book 378; cf. CPM p.287

In another, *Nāṣīrūtha* is the spiritual drink of the gnostic Saviour:

In an inner vessel, they concealed you (*Kūshṭā,* Truth),
the Wellspring of Living Waters has blessed you,
and the *Nāṣīrūtha* which emanated therefrom
will quench your thirst.
It will be your portion and treasure will arise to its owner.

Mandaean Prayer Book 178; cf. CPM p.160

In others, *Nāṣīrūtha* is the supreme *gnosis* of God, as in an allegorical poem in which one of the mythical Mandaean Saviours, "*Mahzian*-the-Word", is sent to awaken "Adam", who symbolizes man:

So he (Adam, man) concentrated his thought,
and prostrated himself before *Mahzian*-the-Word, … then arose.
Then he (the Word) instructed him in the ABG (*equiv.* ABC),
and, little by little, he comprehended all *Nāṣīrūtha.*

Alma Rishaia Rba 125–35; cf. SA p.26, PNC pp.7–8

See also: **Nazarite** (▸2), **Nāṣoraean** (▸2).

neti neti (S) *Lit.* not this *(neti),* not this *(neti);* not this, not that; a means of approaching ultimate Reality or *Brahman,* which indicates its transcendent nature, and which is put forward in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad. Neti neti* means that Reality is neither this nor that, that it cannot be described in terms of anything known through the mind or senses. In simple terms, it means that Reality, *Brahman,* is beyond all description and comparison. He is what He is; He is neither this nor that. *Brahman* and *ātman* (the soul) are both indicated by the phrase, *neti neti.*

Philosophically, *neti neti* is a way of describing Reality by negating all that it is not. Ordinarily, when a quality or attribute is ascribed to something, by implication it becomes limited to that quality, and a number of other qualities are implicitly denied to it. For example, when a flower is said to be red, the qualities of blueness or greenness are implicitly denied to it. Every such qualification is thus a negation of other mutually excluded characteristics.

Ultimate Reality, *Brahman* or God, however, is perfect and all-fulfilled, lacking nothing. He (or It) is simply beyond all attributes or features. No positive quality can thus be ascribed to Him. The *Upanishads* recognize this, and therefore deny that God possesses any characteristics or attributes.

Developing this principle, Shankara called *Brahman* attributeless or beyond qualities *(nirguṇa)*. It is simply a way of pointing to ultimate Reality by way of what It is not. The ultimate Reality is thus regarded as indescribable, ineffable, infinite, incomprehensible, beyond all thought and speech, and so on. Its completely transcendent nature is indicated by saying that It is beyond everything of which a human being can conceive or speak. Hence, the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* describes *Brahman* by saying:

> Now, therefore, the description of *Brahman:*
> "Not this, not this *(neti neti).*"
> For there is no other more appropriate description
> than this: "Not this *(neti).*"
>
> *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 2:3.6, U3 p.172*

The soul or *ātman* is similarly described:

> This self *(ātman)* is described as,
> "Not this, not this *(neti neti)*".
> It is imperceptible, for it cannot be grasped;
> Imperishable, for it never perishes;
> Unattached, for it is never attached;
> It is unfettered, feels no suffering,
> and cannot be injured.
>
> *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 3:9.26, 4:2.4, 4:4.22, 4:5.15*

Later Indian Saints have also echoed the same truth, as did Tulsīdās:

> The *Vedas* declare Your glory, saying,
> "Not this *(neti)*".
> You are the same in all the three times (present, past and future).
>
> *Tulsīdās, Rām Charit Mānas 1:340.4, RCM p.350*

And:

> Your Being, O *Rām,* is beyond the range of speech,
> and beyond the reach of intellect.
> It is incomprehensible, indescribable and infinite,
> the *Vedas* ever speak of it as,
> "Not this, not this *(neti neti)*".
>
> *Tulsīdās, Rām Charit Mānas 2:126, RCM p.491*

See also: **Brahman** (2.1).

nirguṇ(a), nirguṇ(a) Brahman (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* without *(nir)* attributes *(guṇas);* devoid of qualities; a Vedantic term used to distinguish between *nirguṇa Brahman* (*Brahman* without attributes) as opposed to *saguṇa Brahman* (*Brahman* with attributes).

Nirguṇa is used by Shankara as an epithet of *Brahman,* the ultimate Reality, which he described as, "*Neti neti* (not this, not this)", implying that anything that can be described must have attributes for the description to be given, and is hence not *Brahman.*

The term appears in the *Bhagavad Gītā,* the *Upanishads* and other texts, where it refers to the highest Reality of *Brahman:*

> The one resplendent God
> is hidden in all beings.
> All-pervading, the inmost Self *(Ātman)* of all creatures,
> the overseer of all action *(karma),*
> dwelling in all beings –
> He is the witness, the knower, the Absolute,
> free of all attributes *(nirguṇa).*
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 6:11*

The highest level of *Brahman* is so refined and subtle that it appears to be without form or attributes. According to some Saints, however, *Brahman,* as it is described in the *Upanishads,* corresponds to the highest level of the mind. It is a reflection of the true Lord who lies higher up, beyond all differentiation of the mind. As Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes:

> The path of the *Sant Satguru* (perfect Master) is distinct from that of both *sarguṇ* (with attributes) and *nirguṇ* (without attributes). The creation in *sat lok* (true region) is everlasting and real, and so is its Creator, *Sat Purush* (the true Lord).
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Prose 2:56, SB p.65*

The term *nirguṇ* has also been used for *pārbrahm,* the first realm lying immediately beyond the realms of the mind and hence beyond the *guṇas,* or primary attributes of the mind:

> The region of *sahans dal kanwal* begins above the eyes, and this is the beginning of *brahmāṇḍ.* This ends below the plane of *daswān dwār;* that is, it extends up to *Praṇav.* The region above that is called *pār brahmāṇḍ.* According to the teachings of the Saints, the lower regions form part of the gross *sarguṇ,* while the two regions of *sahans dal kanwal* and *trikuṭī* are called pure *sarguṇ* and beyond that is the *sunn,* called pure *nirguṇ.* The region of the Saints commences beyond

> that. That is why it is said that the home of the Saints lies beyond both *sargun̤* and *nirgun̤*. This would also explain why Lord Kṛishṇa advised Arjuna to cross the limit of the *Vedas* – which deal only with the *gun̤as* or *sargun̤* – in order to attain the real.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Prose 1:26, SB p.15*

Nirgun̤ is also used by some other Saints as descriptive of the Supreme Being who is free from the three *gun̤as* (attributes or qualities). Saints have been described as the devotees of the *nirgun̤*, since only the supreme Lord is completely without attributes. The various schools and proponents of *Vedānta*, however, differ as to whether God (or which aspect of Him) is really with attributes *(saguṇa)* or without attributes *(nirguṇa)*.

See also: **guṇa** (5.2), **neti neti**, **saguṇa Brahman**.

nīst, **nīstī** (P) *Lit.* nonexistent; having no external or manifested existence. *Nīstī* is contrasted with *hastī*, that which is manifested in external existence, *i.e.* the world of phenomena. God, the inward Reality, imperceptible to the senses, is *nīstī*.

However, the meaning is sometimes reversed. God is then described as the only One who is truly existent *(hastī)*; all else is illusion or nonexistent *(nīstī)*.

See also: **hast**.

param(a) Tattva (S/H), **param Tant**, **param Tatt** (Pu) *Lit.* the highest *(param)* That-ness or Thing in Itself *(Tattva, Tant, Tatt)*; the highest, supreme or ultimate Reality; Reality in its utmost subtlety; the supreme Essence. The term *tattva* is derived from *tat* (that) and *tva*, a suffix meaning '-ness'. Its literal meaning is thus 'that-ness', where 'that' is a means of indicating something which is hidden as opposed to something else which is manifest. A *tattva* is hence the thing itself, the reality underlying the word, the description or the concept. The highest that-ness, essence or *tattva*, the *param Tattva*, is ultimate Reality or God Himself, which is beyond names and everything else. The term has been used by some mystics for God, as for instance:

> To the contemplative sages,
> He *(Rām)* shone forth as the manifestation
> of ultimate Reality *(param Tattva)* –
> placid, pure, in equipoise and radiant by nature.
>
> *Tulsīdās, Rām Charit Mānas 1:241.2, RCM p.249*

And:

> Says Nānak, hear thou, O *Gorakh,*
> the Lord is the embodiment of truth *(sat sarūp):*
> The supreme Reality *(param Tant)* has neither sign nor form.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 952, MMS*

See also: **tattva**, **tattva** (5.1).

P'ŭ (**Pŭ**) (C) *Lit.* unworked wood, an uncarved block; hence, that which is plain, unadorned, pure, natural, original, simple, genuine; mystically, Primal Simplicity; used by Lăo Tzu in the *Tào Té Chīng* as a metaphor to describe the original simplicity of *Tào,* which is nameless, formless and pristine:

> *Tào* is forever *(héng)* nameless.
> Small as It is in its Primal Simplicity *(P'ŭ),*
> It is inferior to nothing in the world.
>
> *Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 32; cf. TTCW p.65*

Lăo Tzu also uses *p'ŭ* to describe the pure, simple, original, genuine, true nature of a human being that is revealed by the elimination of ego in the experience of *Tào:*

> Manifest plainness and embrace the genuine *(p'ŭ);*
> Lessen self interest and make few your desires.
>
> *Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 19, LTTC p.224*

See also: **Tào**, **tzù ján**.

ṛita (S) *Lit.* truth, in the sense of the natural and proper course of things, the cosmic order, the law of nature, the natural moral law; also, true, honest, proper, right; an important term from early Vedic philosophy, implying that there is a natural cosmic law underlying the unstable show of phenomena. Corresponding to this order of nature, there is a law of righteousness in the moral world. Thus, *ṛita* is not only the law of nature, but also the regulating human principle of morality and righteousness. This law is expounded in later Hindu thought as the law of *karma.* Even the gods cannot transgress it. That is why *ṛita* came to be used in the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā* in the sense of higher truth, of right or divinely ordained law or order. *Ṛita* is thus akin to the term *dharma.* The *Ṛig Veda* says:

The whole universe is founded on *ṛita,* and moves in it.

Ṛig Veda 4:23.9

O *Indra,* lead us on the path of *ṛita,*
on the right path over all evils.

Ṛig Veda 10:133.6

Likewise, the *Upanishads* say:

Salutation to *Brahman!*
Salutation to You, O *Vāyu* (wind god)!
You indeed are *Brahman* manifest:
I shall speak of you as the manifest *Brahman;*
I shall speak of you as the law *(ṛita);*
I shall speak of you as the truth *(satya).*

Taittirīya Upanishad 1:1.2

In the heavens, He (the supreme Reality) is the sun,
in the space (between earth and sky) – the air,
at the altar – the priest,
in the house – the guest.
He dwells in men, in the gods,
in truth *(ṛita),* in the heavens.
He is (all that is) born of water, on earth,
in the sacrifice, on the mountains.
He is truth *(ṛita)* and power.

Kaṭha Upanishad 2:2.2

saguṇ(a), saguṇ(a) Brahman (S/H/Pu), **sarguṇ** (H/Pu) *Lit.* possessed of *(sa)* qualities *(guṇas);* having attributes, as opposed to being without attributes *(nirguṇa). Saguṇa Brahman* encompasses all things and beings made up of the three *guṇas,* everything within the realm of time, space and causation. In the system of some Indian Saints, this description identifies *saguṇa Brahman* as everything within the mind worlds, from the universal mind down to the lower limits of the physical universe *(piṇḍa).*

According to Shankara, the foremost exponent of *Advaita Vedānta, Brahman,* the sole and absolute Reality, is *nirguṇa* (without attributes). It has no divisions; It Transcends the *guṇas;* It has no qualities and is not related to anything else. It transcends perceptible things and is beyond causality. It is pure and ultimate consciousness, incapable of being understood by the mind.

Moreover, It is, by definition, incapable of temporal action. It cannot create. The ultimate Reality, which is One, does not – in Itself – become many,

for if *Brahman* changed, It would cease to be *Brahman.* According to *Advaita,* the universe belongs to a level of experience different from Reality, and is created, not by undifferentiated *nirguṇa Brahman,* but by *Brahman* united with *māyā* (cosmic illusion).

According to *Advaita,* the universe is a 'superimposition' upon *Brahman.* Although *Brahman* cannot be perceived by the senses, there is an intuitive awareness of Its existence as the inner self or soul, the *ātman.* But, through ignorance *(avidyā)* caused by *māyā,* the sense of individuality or ego is imposed upon this supreme Existence. Once this happens, the inevitable result is the superimposition of a world of multiple forms and objects upon the undivided *Brahman.* This apparent universe, neither real nor unreal, and having as its basis the unchanging *Brahman,* is *māyā.* It is neither real, nor is it of the nature of true 'Being', for it ceases to exist when Truth is realized. *Brahman* does not transform Itself into the universe; It appears as if It were the universe. It is not unreal, for, until Truth is realized, It provides the experience, though illusory, of the relative world.

Māyā is thus the source of all multiplicity. Causality can only exist in the world of multiplicity. Yet *māyā* cannot be grasped by the human mind, since the mind is its creation. To find the cause of *māyā* is to transcend it. The moment *māyā* is transcended, it ceases to exist. Hence, individual ignorance can only end through spiritual illumination. However, *māyā* is a universal principle, and will continue for as long as the universe exists, even though ceasing for the one who has been illumined.

Brahman united with *māyā* has the dual nature of both being and becoming. The pure Absolute appears as the personal Lord. This is the *saguṇa Brahman – Brahman* with attributes – called *Īshvara* (the Lord). *Īshvara* is the creative aspect of *Brahman,* all-knowing, all-powerful and all-pervasive who, by means of *māyā,* creates, preserves and dissolves the universe in a ceaseless process.

Īshvara, the *saguṇa Brahman,* partakes of both reality and appearance, of being and becoming. This *Īshvara* is the effective cause of the universe, the source of all change, all names and forms, and the home of all finite existence. He possesses all attributes in their perfection, but the possession of *guṇas* limits him. *Advaita,* however, does not suggest that there are two gods, the absolute *Brahman* and the personal *Īshvara.* The personalized *Īshvara* is not the Ultimate, only *nirguṇa Brahman* is.

Worship of the personal God is worship of *saguṇa Brahman.* This can take the form of the worship of a deity representing a particular aspect of his functions or attributes *e.g.* of *Brahmā* as creator, or *Vishṇu* as preserver, or *Shiva* as destroyer, or of an *avatār* (an incarnation of a deity, especially *Vishṇu*). It can also take the form of idol worship.

Worship of the personal God is not decried in *Vedānta.* In fact, apart from serving an ethical and social purpose, it is considered a stepping stone to that

transcendental consciousness in which the illusion of *māyā* ceases, the ego disappears, and *Īshvara* and the world of appearances are perceived to have no essential reality.

See also: **Brahman** (2.1), **nirguṇa Brahman**.

sār (H/Pu) *Lit.* essence, quintessence, substance, truth; hence, best or choicest part, heart, marrow, cream, gist; real, true, genuine, strength, vigour. Esoterically, *sār* signifies that which is of the ultimate Essence, the Real and the True. Writing in the name of God, Tulsī Sāhib says that He is the Truth or "Essence *(Sār)* within everything":

> In the entire universe, there is no other creator,
> it is all my manifestation:
> I am the Essence *(Sār)* within everything.
> *Tulsī Sāhib, Ghaṭ Rāmāyaṇ 1, Mangal 6, GR1 p.56*

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh points out that this divine Truth cannot be experienced by exercise of the intellect:

> This secret is realized by practice,
> and not by intellectual discussion.
> Discarding intellectual discussion,
> engage in practice.
> Only then can you realize the Truth *(Sār)*.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 24:1.148, SBP p.207*

sat (S/H/Pu), **satya** (S), **sach** (H/Pu) *Lit.* that which exists; from the Sanskrit *as* (to be); hence, true, real, actual, right, fit, permanent, abiding, eternal; good, virtuous, worthy; also, truth, truthfulness, reality, essence; the terms are both nouns and adjectives.

In moral life, *satya* is the virtue of truthfulness in thought, word and deed; it is one of the five *yams* (positive injunctions) of *ashṭānga yoga*. Mystically, *satya* is that which exists forever, beyond all change and the possibility that it could cease to exist. Since the entire creation is subject to change, nothing in it is considered true, real or *sat*. Only God, the unchanging and eternal Source, is true or real, in the highest sense. Hence, *sat, satya* and *sach* also mean ever abiding, imperishable, ever existent, unchanging and real. The terms are used a great deal in mystic writings, where they refer to that which is of the highest Truth. They also appear in a number of other terms, as in *Satguru* (true *Guru* or Master), *sat Shabd* (true Word, true Sound), *sat lok* (true region), *sach khaṇḍ* (true region), and so on.

The terms are used in contrast to that which is false *(asat),* referring specifically to everything within the realms of *māyā* (illusion), which obscures Reality. The terms, in various permutations, are among the commonest in mystic literature. "*Sat, Sat, Sat,*" says Guru Arjun, "is the almighty Lord,"[1] meaning that God is the essence of Truth, Reality and eternity.

In *Vedānta,* that which remains the same eternally, without any change, is called *satya,* the supreme Reality that is the same in the past, present and future. In the *Upanishads,* the self-existent, universal Spirit, *Brahman,* is called *sat* or *satya:*

> He who knows *Brahman* as reality *(satya),*
> as knowledge, as infinity, …
> He, being one with the omniscient *Brahman,*
> attains fulfilment of all desires.
>
> *Taittirīya Upanishad 2:1.3*

Or, as one of the most ancient *mantras* has it, as recorded in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad:*

> From the unreal *(asat),*
> lead me to the Real *(Sat),*
> From darkness *(tamas),*
> lead me to light *(jyoti),*
> From death *(mṛityu),*
> lead me to immortality *(amṛita).*
>
> *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 1:3.28*

Sometimes, the meanings are reversed. If the creation is existence or being, then the divine Source is Nonexistence or Nonbeing. The *Chhāndogya Upanishad* puts it both ways:

> In the beginning, … there was only Being *(Sat),*
> one alone, with no second.
> Some say that, in the beginning,
> there was only Nonbeing *(Asat),*
> one alone, with no second;
> And from that Nonbeing *(Asat)* arose being *(sat).*
>
> *Chhāndogya Upanishad 6:2.1*

One of the most poignant, provocative and well-known of all Indian writings on the subject is the *Nāsadīya Hymn* from the *Ṛig Veda,* otherwise known as the *Creation Hymn:*

Neither being *(sat)* nor Nonbeing *(Asat)* existed then;
Neither was there air, nor the heavens beyond.
What breathed? Where? In whose care?
Was water there, unfathomably deep?

There was neither death nor immortality then;
Of light and day, there was no sign.
The One breathed, without breath, by Its own impulse:
besides It, nothing else existed.

Darkness was wrapped in darkness then:
all was one unruffled sea.
Then the One, hidden in void, stirred, came forth:
through fervour, came to be.

A desire came upon that One in the beginning:
the primal seed of mind *(manas)*.
Seers, seeking with wisdom within themselves,
found the link between being *(sat)* and Nonbeing *(Asat)*.

A line distinguished the one from the other –
what was below? What above?
There were seed placers; there were generative powers:
there was impulse from beneath; there was giving birth above.

Who really knows? Who can tell the tale?
How did it all arise? Whence this creation?
Even the gods came later, after it was formed.
Who, then, can tell how it has come to be?

None knows whence this creation has arisen –
whether He made it or it formed itself –
He who surveys it from the highest heaven:
Only He knows; or maybe He does not.

Ṛig Veda 10:129

See also: **asat**, **al-Ḥaqīqah**, **Truth**.

1. Guru Arjun, *Ādi Granth* 279.

shūnyatā (S/H) *Lit.* empty *(shūnya)* -ness *(tā)*, emptiness; void-ness; a technical and essentially Buddhist term used to describe the essential nature of all

things or absolute Reality by the *Mādhyamika* (*lit.* relating to the middle) school of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, propounded by *Nāgārjuna* around two thousand years ago. Because this school teaches the 'void-ness' of all things, *Mādhyamika* is also known as *Shūnyavāda.*

Shūnyavāda has been the subject of two contrary interpretations. The first takes it as a complete denial of all existence, a kind of intellectual nihilism that admits of no reality whatsoever. The second reads in it a mystic state, *nirvāṇa,* transcending mind and intellect, which points to an ultimate but indescribable Reality, devoid of multiplicity or phenomenal characteristics.

The first view has been more commonly subscribed to by Hindu and Jain (and some Buddhist) thinkers, and it is pertinent to outline briefly those tenets of the teaching on which it purports to be based. *Mādhyamika* questions the validity of knowledge, *per se,* and not merely of some aspects of everyday experience. It points out that all knowledge, perceptual or inferred, is relative, and that there is none that is absolutely true. Upon examination, all kinds of inconsistency are found in so-called everyday reality and its hollowness is uncovered. Nāgārjuna examines concepts such as motion and rest, substance and attribute, space and time, showing with relentless logic that they are nothing but a network of inexplicable relationships.

He brings out the contradictions of causal relationships. He observes that an object and its cause cannot be seen as separate from each other. In absolute terms, therefore, there is no causation and no change. "The doer is so-called in relation to the deed, and the deed is so-called in relation to the doer. Absolutely speaking, there is neither doer nor doing."[1]

If objects and matter are unreal, then the self or soul is no less so. All that is meant by self is an uninterrupted series of momentary mental states. Of the true nature of consciousness, nothing is known. There is no knower and no object of knowledge.

According to Buddhist philosophy, everything in the world is dependent on something else for its origin and existence. According to *Mādhyamika,* this dependence demonstrates that nothing has any absolute reality. An absolute Reality would, *per se,* require it to be independent of everything else. Yet *Mādhyamika* goes even further – it denies the possibility of origination itself. "Nothing exists anywhere, whether we conceive of it as born of itself or of others, or of both or of no cause whatsoever."[2]

If there is no subject and no object, and no cause apart from effect, there can be no God distinct from (and causing) the universe. Both God and universe are appearances. There is no distinction between good and evil or truth and error. All experience is a delusion. "There is no death, no birth, no distinction, no persistence, no oneness, no manyness, no coming in, no going forth."[3]

Not surprisingly, such severe logic led many to conclude that Nāgārjuna's teaching was nihilistic, denying an ultimate Reality, and holding that nothing

existed except nothingness. Some, however, examining the doctrine more closely, have found nihilism to be a misinterpretation of his teaching. Nāgārjuna had himself warned against misunderstanding *shūnyatā:*

> Emptiness *(shūnyatā),* if wrongly understood, will destroy a person of feeble mind, like a snake wrongly grasped or knowledge wrongly cultivated.
>
> *Nāgārjuna, Madhyamaka Kārikā 24:11; cf. NPN pp.46, 114*

What is denied is the reality of the phenomenal world and of the ability of the intellect to know either the universe or the ultimate Truth. What is repudiated is the deistic God, a Creator presumed to exist purely on the testimony of reason, not on transcendent experience of the Absolute. Behind the inexplicable contradictions of empirical existence, there is an ultimate Reality, indicated but not defined. It cannot be defined because language – the means of definition – itself belongs to the realm of the empirical, and the Infinite cannot be described in terms of the finite. Thus, abandoning description, Nāgārjuna calls it, negatively, 'void' – *shūnya:*

> It cannot be called void *(shūnya)* or not void *(ashūnya),* or both or neither; but in order to indicate it, it is called the void *(shūnya).*
>
> *Nāgārjuna, Madhyamaka Kārikā 22:11, in IP1 p.663*

This is not a unique position. The *Upanishads* also repeatedly define the Absolute *(Brahman)* in negative terms – "Not this, not this *(neti neti)*".

This approach to Reality is rooted in the teachings of the Buddha himself. Buddha was not interested in expounding theories of the soul and the world, thereby providing fuel for fruitless discussion. "The *Tathāgata* has no theories."[4] He was a practical teacher insisting that Truth is to be experienced personally, for oneself. It does not seem that he was agnostic or atheistic, as has often been said. In fact, he spoke of *Brahman,* the Upanishadic expression for the ultimate Reality:

> For *Brahman* I know, … and the world of *Brahman,* and the path which leads to it. Yes, I know it even as one who has entered the *Brahman* world, and has been born within it.
>
> *Tevijja Sutta 1:43; cf. in SHI p.173*

And:

> There is an Unborn, an Unoriginated,
>   an Unmade, an Uncompounded;
> Were there not, O mendicants, there would be no escape

from the world of the born, the originated,
the made, and the compounded.

Udāna 8:3, in SHI p.181

He offered the way to "peace of mind, to the higher wisdom, to full enlightenment, to *nirvāṇa*".[5] This *nirvāṇa* is the same as the *jīvanmukti* of the Hindu. It is a state, not of annihilation but of realization, of perfect bliss transcending mind, intellect and knowledge. If it is referred to in negative terms that is because it can be pointed to only by such means. This *nirvāṇa,* for which *shūnyatā* is another name, refutes the charge of nihilism. The bliss attained is proof of the Absolute.

Basing his teaching on that of the Buddha, Nāgārjuna described the conditioned reality of this world as "like a mirage or a dream",[6] quite contrary in nature to the higher Reality of the "transcendent absolute Truth":

> The teaching of Buddha relates to two kinds of truth, the relative, conditioned truth and the transcendent absolute Truth.
>
> *Nāgārjuna, Madhyamaka Kārikā 24:8, in IP1 p.658*

But this higher Reality is beyond words:

> That indeed is the absolute Reality *(Paramārtha)* which is at peace, not dependant on anything, beyond the fabrication of words, and known only inwardly by the enlightened ones. It cannot be preached (in words), nor known (intellectually).
>
> *Chandrakīrti, Prasannapadā, on Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka Kārikā 24:8, MSN p.216*

And this ultimate Reality is *shūnyatā:*

> *Shūnyatā* is the synonym of that which has no cause, that which is beyond thought or conception, that which is not produced, that which is not born, that which is without measure.
>
> *Ashṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā 18, IP1 p.663*

Shūnyatā, identified by *Mādhyamika* with *nirvāṇa,* is Truth. It is "*tathātā* (such-ness) which neither increases nor decreases". It is "profound", has no cause, is beyond contemplation or conception, beyond existence or non-existence.

Although Shankara summarily dismissed *Shūnyavāda,* clear similarities exist between it and *Advaita Vedānta.*[7] Since the universe is subject to change, both regard it as unreal. Both admit to an unchanging Reality transcending all empirical knowledge. Both speak of *māyā* (illusion) and *avidyā* (ignorance). While an ethical life in the phenomenal world is regarded by

both as a ladder for reaching a higher stage, ultimate release is not obtained by morality and ethics alone. *Advaita Vedānta* may more fully elaborate some of these doctrines, but they are more than hinted at in *Shūnyavāda.* In fact, it is somewhat ironic that a teaching that sought to point out the futility of all intellectual theorizing should itself have been unfairly subjected to the charge of nihilistic intellectualism.

The confusion has arisen because Nāgārjuna used the term *shūnya* both for empirical existence, the world of everyday experience, and for ultimate Reality. Both are *shūnya,* but in different senses. There is, however, no ambiguity in Nāgārjuna's exhortation, "O Subhūti, all things have for their refuge *shūnyatā;* they do not alter that refuge."[8]

The position of *Mādhyamika* is well summarized by Dr Radhakrishnan:

> The *Mādhyamika* denies that discursive thought can establish ultimate Truth. "The learned call *shūnyatā* the annulment of all conceptions; even those who look upon it as *shūnyatā* are said to be incapable of improvement."[9] "What description or knowledge can be given of an object that cannot be described by letters? Even this much – that it does not admit of representation by letters – is made by means of illusory attribution."[10] In "illusory attribution", we use a notion which is the closest approximation to the object studied but at once withdraw it since it is inadequate to its content. To know *shūnya* is to know all; if we do not know it, we know nothing. The unique undefinable *(anirvachanīya)* Being is said to be the real of all reals *(dharmāṇām dharmatā),* the essential this-ness *(idamtā),* such-ness *(tathātā),* the such-ness of all existence *(bhūtatathātā),* the very matrix of the lord Buddha *(Tathāgata-garbha).* It will be very difficult to account for Nāgārjuna's metaphysics and his insistence on devotion *(bhakti)* if we do not admit the absolutist implications of his doctrine of *shūnya.*
>
> *S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy 1, IP1 p.701*

See also: **hsü.**

1. Nāgārjuna, *Madhyamaka Kārikā* 16:10, in *IP1* p.653.
2. Nāgārjuna, *Madhyamaka Kārikā* 1:3, in *OIP* p.220.
3. Nāgārjuna, *Madhyamaka Kārikā* 1:1, in *IP1* p.655.
4. *Majjhima Nikāya* 1:486, in *SHI* p.172.
5. *Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness* 4, in *SHI* p.189.
6. Nāgārjuna, *Madhyamaka Kārikā* 23:8.
7. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* 1, *IP1* p.702.
8. Nāgārjuna, *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra,* in *IP1* pp.663, 699.
9. Nāgārjuna, *Madhyamaka Kārikā* 13:8, in *IP1* p.701.
10. Nāgārjuna, *Mādhyamika Vṛitti* 15, in *IP1* p.701.

ṣifah (A), **ṣifat** (P) (pl. *ṣifāt*) *Lit.* quality, epithet, mode, attribute, characteristic, adjective, way, manner; from *waṣafa* (to describe); the adjectival form is *ṣifātī;* often contrasted with *dhāt* (essence, P. *źāt*) and *dhātī* (essential, P. *źātī*). The allied term, *waṣf,* and its adjectival form *waṣfī,* have similar meanings to *ṣifah* and *ṣifātī,* although the latter have a wider spread of meaning, and are more commonly used in Sufi literature.

Ṣifah denotes an attribute, a quality of the thing or person being described. The Attributes of *Allāh* in Islamic theology are closely related to and derived from His Names *(Asmā'),* as revealed in the *Qur'ān.* Since He calls Himself 'the Wise *(al-Ḥakīm)*', He possesses the attribute of wisdom. Since He is called 'the Merciful *(al-Raḥmān)*', it can be certain that mercy is one of His Attributes. Such *Ṣifāt* are used to describe the Attributes of God, as opposed to the reality of His Essence *(al-Dhāt).*

The mystic and the theologian have different views concerning the *ṣifātī* and *dhātī* names of *Allāh.* For the Muslim theologian, the ninety-nine names of *Allāh* are categorized in various ways. Names describing certain qualities of God are called 'essential *(dhātī, źātī)*' and others 'attributive *(ṣifātī)*'. The 'essential' or 'substantive' names are those that seem more essentially a part of His nature, those that always characterize Him; qualities such as eternity, oneness, omniscience, life, power, will, hearing and seeing are seen as always being a part of His nature.

The *ṣifātī* names relate to aspects He sometimes manifests or things He sometimes does. That is, He is the Expediter *(al-Muqaddim)* and also the Delayer *(al-Mu'akhkhir);* He is the Exalter *(al-Rāfi')* and also the Abaser *(al-Khāfiḍ);* He is the Compeller *(al-Jabbār),* the Nourisher *(al-Muqīt)* and the Accounter *(al-Ḥasīb).*

For the mystic, all names of God, without exception, are *ṣifātī.* They can be read, written or spoken, and are descriptive in nature. There are hundreds of names of God in different languages, and they are all attributive. The essential or *źātī* Name, from the mystic's perspective, is the unspoken, unwritten, cosmic Law. It is the creative Power of God, which emanates from His Essence *(Źāt)* and supports the entire creation.

Creation itself is formed as the expression of the divine Attributes *(Ṣifat).* Hence, al-Qayṣarī writes that the Attributes of the Divine – whether of His Essence or of the conditional aspects of His being – together form the channel or link, the "isthmus *(barzakh)*", by which the multiplicity of created existence comes into being. The divine Attributes are also manifested in the *Khalīfah,* the Perfect Man, the Master:

> *Ṣifat* is that which is not independent, is not detached from what it characterizes. God has two kinds of Attributes *(Ṣifāt).* Firstly, there are those of the Essence *(Źāt),* those which are unchangeable, pre-existent and eternal. These Attributes *(Ṣifāt)* are three: oneness, pre-existence and primordiality. The others are Attributes *(Ṣifāt)* of action.

Some of God's Attributes *(Ṣifāt)* are conditioned, dependent upon one another. For example, knowledge is dependent upon life. But God's Names and Attributes *(Ṣifāt)* are endless. His Attributes *(Ṣifāt)* can also be affirmative, such as life *(ḥayāt)*, necessity *(vujūb)* and guardianship, or their opposites, such as great holiness or sacredness.

Each of these Attributes *(Ṣifāt)* is a form of existence and all of them together are of the rank of divinity, and form the first multiplicity bringing existence *(vujūd)* into being. They are the isthmus *(barzakh)* between the exalted oneness of the Essence and the manifestation of the *Khalīfah* (the Master).

Dā'ūd al-Qayṣarī, Sharḥ-i Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam, SFH pp.12–13; Kalābādhī, Sharḥ-i Ta'arruf, ST p.111; in FLI pp.532–33

'Ināyat Khān describes the relationship between *Źāt* and *ṣifat* in a similar manner. *Ṣifat,* he says, is what *Źāt* projects from Itself; as this *ṣifat* comes from *Źāt,* it is also withdrawn back and absorbed into *Źāt:*

> *Źāt* projects *ṣifat* from Its own self, and absorbs it within Itself.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK5 p.14*

Źāt may be called the Knower, *ṣifat* the known. *Ṣifat* is the manifested aspect of the pure, unmanifested *Źāt.* That is, *ṣifat* represents all that is known and knowable. Within this *ṣifat,* distinctions are made, as between what is audible and what is visible; whereas, in the absolute Oneness of *Źāt,* such distinctions are meaningless:

> The manifested aspect (of *Źāt*) is called *ṣifat,* the outer experience. It is in the manifestation as *ṣifat* that one sees the distinction or the difference between what is visible and what is audible; in their real aspect of being they are one and the same.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK2 p.130*

Yet, he also says, this *ṣifat* and the *Źāt* are really one in the sense that there is nothing but God, whether manifest or unmanifest. *Ṣifat* and *Źāt* are simply two aspects of the one Supreme Being. One is visible and knowable, and the other is pure unmanifested Oneness.

A further explanation offered by 'Ināyat Khān is that *Źāt* is God, and *ṣifat* is the son of God, the perfect Man, the Prophet, the perfect Saint, who manifests all the attributes of God. Just as the *Ḥaqīqah al-Muḥammadīyah* (the Reality of Muḥammad) is an expression for the Reality within all perfect Saints, so 'Ināyat Khān says that *ṣifat* has many names, "the sum of them all being termed Muḥammad":

> According to Sufi tenets, the two aspects of the Supreme Being are termed *Źāt* and *ṣifat,* the Knower and the known. The former is *Allāh* and the latter is Muḥammad. *Źāt* being only one in its existence, cannot be called by more than one name, which is *Allāh;* and *ṣifat,* being manifold in four different involutions, has numerous names, the sum of them all being termed Muḥammad. The ascending and descending forms of *Źāt* and *ṣifat* form the circle of the Absolute.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK5 p.14*

See also: **asmā'**, **asmā' al-dhātīyah**, **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná** (2.1), **al-Dhāt**.

sirr al-Ḥaqīqah, al- (A), **sirr-i Ḥaqīqat** (P) *Lit.* the mystery *(sirr)* of Reality *(Ḥaqīqah).* The divine Reality is called *sirr al-Ḥaqīqah* because – though it pervades everything and everywhere – it is a mystery defying all human understanding.

See also: **al-Ḥaqīqah**.

sod ha-Elohut (He) *Lit.* the secret *(sod)* of the Divinity *(ha-Elohut);* the mystery of the Godhead; used by a number of Kabbalists, especially Shabbetai Ẓevi of seventeenth-century Turkey, to describe the relationship between the God of the Bible, as the personal God addressed in Jewish prayers, and the ultimate transcendent Lord, the impersonal First Cause or infinite Source (the *Ayn-Sof*), who exists in permanence and eternal concealment.

The term arose from a consideration of how the Godhead – which is aloof, perfect, self-contained, beyond even the will to create – could give rise to the creation. In attempting to resolve this paradox, the Kabbalah reveals a subtle relationship between the *Ayn-Sof* and the three highest *sefirot* (emanations), and tries to show how It can be both their source, yet distinct from them. The Kabbalah contains an elaborate description of the creative process in terms of an initial 'withdrawal' of the Godhead into itself, creating a vacuum into which the initial emanation of the divine qualities takes place.

Shabbetai Ẓevi gave his own interpretation of this teaching. In common with earlier Kabbalists, he taught that *Yahweh,* the personal God of the Bible, could be identified with the sixth *sefirah* of *Tiferet* (the attribute of divine mercy, splendour or beauty), the Godhead itself (the *Ayn-Sof*) being the unmanifested Root of roots. But he also taught that the divine Self called *Yahweh* was at the same time "above the sefirotic emanations though It manifests itself in one of them".[1] That is, *Yahweh* is of a substance or reality that transcends the very nature of the *sefirot.*

Thus, while previous Kabbalists had identified the various names of God, including *Yahweh,* with the seven *sefirot,* according to Shabbetai, *Yahweh* was not just one of the *sefirot,* but "a substance that derives from the highest and utterly hidden Root and that, together with the *Shekhinah* (the divine indwelling presence), remains above the whole structure of the *sefirot*".[2]

See also: **Ayn-Sof** (2.1), **ẓimẓum** (5.2).

1. Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah, SSMM* p.121.
2. Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah, SSMM* p.122.

tafṣīl (A/P) *Lit.* detailing, elaboration; bringing forth minute differentiations; used in the sense of *wāḥidīyah* (oneness) bringing forth and 'elaborating' all the divine attributes out of which the multitudinous forms of creation are projected.

See also: **al-Durrat al-Bayḍā'**.

T'ài Chí (Tài Jí) (C) *Lit.* Supreme *(T'ài)* Ultimate *(Chí);* the Great, Primordial Beginning. In Taoist cosmology, the completely transcendent aspect of *Tào* is called called *Wǔ Chí* (*lit.* without limits), the transcendent state of Non-being. *T'ài Chí* is the source of the immanent or generated aspect of *Tào,* the infinitude of being that emanates from *Wǔ Chí.* Before creation, *yīn* and *yáng,* the dual principles behind all things, were integrated in *T'ài Chí* as a oneness of being, a singularity. When *T'ài Chí* polarized into the principles of *yīn* and *yáng,* it gave birth to the universe of a myriad things, just as the connection between male and female gives birth to offspring. Thus, *T'ài Chí* is at the root of all that is created.

Huà Hú Chīng, a Taoist text said to contain the teachings of Lǎo Tzu, collected after the *Tào Té Chīng* was written, describes how the principle of *T'ài Chí* affects everything in the cosmos through its emanations of *yīn* and *yáng:*

> The still phenomenon is called *yīn,* and the dynamic phenomenon is called *yáng.* The *yáng* is always pushing itself forward, looking for accomplishment, while the *yīn* is always receptive to joining *yáng* and continuing the process of accomplishment. The integration of *yīn* and *yáng* is called *T'ài Chí.*
>
> Everything that exists is an expression of *T'ài Chí.* Every small particle is a *T'ài Chí.* The vast universe is a *T'ài Chí.* A single event is a *T'ài Chí.* The gathering of small events or units is a *T'ài Chí.* There is nothing beyond *T'ài Chí* or excluded from it. Thus, the in-

dividual body is a *T'ài Chí*. The cosmic body is also a *T'ài Chí*. *T'ài Chí* is the integral truth of the universe.

Huà Hú Chīng, HHC pp.54–55

The terms *Wŭ* (Nonbeing) and *yŭ* (being) are commonly used in the *Tào Té Chīng* to contrast the transcendent state of *Tào* with the state of created things. The ultimate characteristic of *Tào* is that It is a transcendent, changeless state of Nonbeing. Out of this changeless state, the world of being expresses itself through *T'ài Chí*. It then gradually reverts to the state of Nonbeing in an endless cycle.

See also: **Tào**, **Wŭ**, **Wŭ Chí**, **yīn yáng** (5.2), **yŭ**.

T'ài Hsṻ (Tài Xū) (C) *Lit.* Supreme *(T'ài)* Void *(Hsṻ);* the Creative Void (but not emptiness or nothingness); the great Non-differentiation or Nothingness. *Tào* is sometimes described as being or residing in *T'ài Hsṻ*.

See also: **hsṻ**, **Tào**.

T'ài Hsüán (Tài Xuán) (C) *Lit.* Supreme *(T'ài)* Mystery *(Hsüán);* the supremely mystical or profound principle, also called *Tào*.

See also: **hsüán**, **Tào**.

T'ài Shĭh (Tài Shĭ) (C) *Lit.* Supreme *(T'ài)* Beginning *(Shĭh);* the primordial beginning of creation, from which the first appearance of material form emanated.

See also: **T'ài Chí**, **T'ài Ī** (2.1), **Tào**.

tanzīh (A/P) *Lit.* transcendent, imperceptible; implying holiness, purity, being beyond all vices and negative qualities; in Muslim theology, God's transcendence, purity and the belief that He is beyond comparison with anything in creation; He is above the creation, incomparable, without impurity *(munazzah)* and different *(mukhālif)* from any created thing. Those who uphold the doctrine of *tanzīh* exclude all human likenesses from descriptions of God.

The contrasting doctrine, *tashbīh* (simile, analogy), stresses God's immanence, His presence in all created things. Sufis have said that a combination

of *tanzīh* and *tashbīh* is a better statement of the truth. He is neither wholly transcendent and aloof, for this would imply a duality in which God is forever separate from His creation; nor is He only immanent, for this would be polytheism. This is implicit in the *Qur'ān* in such seemingly contrasting sayings as, "Associate nothing with Him"[1] *(i.e.* He is *tanzīh),* and "He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing"[2] *(i.e.* He is *tashbīh).*

Rūmī says that both the believer in *tanzīh (muwaḥḥid)* and the believer in *tashbīh (mushabbih)* are bewildered by God, for He is both hidden and manifest:

> Both the *muwaḥḥid* and the *mushabbih* are bewildered by You:
> You who, having no external form, appear in so many forms.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:57; cf. MJR2 p.224*

'Ināyat Khān uses the term *tanzīh* (transcendent) for the three highest planes of creation and *tashbīh* (immanent) for the three lower planes. The *tanzīh* planes, called *aḥadīyah, waḥdah, waḥdānīyah* (all meaning 'oneness', but in varying degrees) are aspects of the Godhead, and are utterly indescribable.[3]

See also: **ta'ayyun** (4.1).

1. *Qur'ān* 4:36.
2. *Qur'ān* 17:1, *KI.*
3. 'Ināyat Khān, *Sufi Message, SMIK1* pp.111–12, *SMIK5* pp.25–26.

Tào (Dào) *Lit.* Way, Path, Truth, Reality; the name given by the Chinese sage Lǎo Tzu (*c.*604–531 BCE) for the indescribable transcendent power, regarded as both eternal and omnipresent. *Tào* represents infinite potentiality, that which is the source of all life and which sustains all creation. However, *Tào* does not embody the idea of a divine personality or of a Supreme Being or God. Rather, It is the underlying energy Principle or Power whose active function *(té)* informs creation, and constitutes the intrinsic nature of all forms of life. Some of the terms that are used in Taoism to describe the attributes of *Tào* include: *Wǔ Chí* (Nonbeing) *T'ài Chí* (Supreme Ultimate), *T'ài Ī* (Great One, Supreme One), *T'ài Shǐh* (Primordial Beginning) and *T'ài Hsüán* (Supreme Mystical, Profound Principle).

Tào is Nameless

Since the essential nature of *Tào* is that It is absolute, transcendent and formless, the true nature of *Tào* cannot be described in words. Lǎo Tzu expresses this clearly at the beginning of the *Tào Té Chīng:*

The *Tào* that can be spoken of
  is not the *Tào* Itself.
The name that can be given
  is not the Name itself.
The Unnameable is the source of the universe.
The nameable is the originator of all things.

Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 1, TNWT p.3

One of the modern translators of the *Tào Té Chīng,* R.B. Blakney, speaks of the nameless, ineffable quality of *Tào* in the introduction to his translation: "The mystics … were not reticent. Theirs was a problem of communication. They had discovered, they said, a unique Something for which there was no word or name. It did not belong to the world in which language is born. The world was Its by-product and nothing could exist without It."[1]

The *Tào Té Chīng* and other classic texts of early Taoism were only a pointer to the Way, descriptions of the Way by those who had followed the Way, who had consciously experienced the Way. But these descriptions are by no means the Way or *Tào* Itself. This is expressed in several passages from the *Tào Té Chīng:*

All the world says to me:
"Great as *Tào* is, It resembles no description."
Because It is great, therefore It resembles no description.
If It resembled any description,
  It would have long since become small.

Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 67, TTCT p.82

If I were to exert myself to define It,
  I might call It great.
Great means extending to the limitless.
Extending to the limitless means reaching the extreme distance.
Reaching the extreme distance means returning to 'nearness'.
Thus *Tào* is great, Heaven is great,
  Earth is great, and man is great, too.

Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 25, TNWT pp.71–72

Lăo Tzu repeatedly emphasizes the futility of trying to give even a hint of the unfathomable nature of *Tào* in words:

Tào, when uttered in words,
  is so pure and void of flavour,
  when one looks at It, one cannot see It;

When one listens to It, one cannot hear It.
However, when one uses It (experiences It),
It is inexhaustible.

Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 35, TTCT p.49

The utter simplicity and pristine naturalness of *Tào* is embodied in the Taoist terms *P'ŭ* and *tzù ján*. *P'ŭ* literally means 'uncarved block' or 'unadorned wood', while *tzù ján* means 'that which it is', a term used to describe the innate genuineness, naturalness and simplicity of *Tào*. Both of these terms emphasize qualities of the transcendent power of *Tào* that reaches beyond names and concepts:

Tào is forever *(héng)* nameless.
Small as It is in Its Primal Simplicity *(P'ŭ)*,
It is inferior to nothing in the world....

When once the Primal Simplicity diversified,
different names appeared.
Are there not enough names now?

Is this not the time to stop?
To know when to stop is to preserve ourselves from danger.

Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 32; cf. TTCW p.65

The invisible, yet all-pervading *Tào* is essentially nameless and indescribable. Yet man, with his power of discrimination and intellect, gives names to all things with which he comes into contact. His conception of reality thus becomes established through the names and meanings he associates with objects, events and ideas – even to mystic principles that cannot be described and defined by names.

Hence, as Lăo Tzu says, when it comes to giving names, "Are there not enough names now? Is this not the time to stop?" Once names are given to things, then meanings are associated with those things, and from these meanings arise attachments, preferences and distinctions. Since everything that can be perceived constantly shifts and changes, this constant attempt to categorize the perceptible world, according to Lăo Tzu, causes pain and suffering.

When a person realizes how out of touch he is with the transcendent, permanent and formless Reality, he begins to take the steps required to gain experience of this Reality. Knowing "when to stop", as Lăo Tzu says, an individual can begin to discover the full reality of *Tào* and "preserve ourselves from danger", the danger that comes from ignorance of the true Reality.

Tào is Changeless

Tào is commonly described as *ch'áng* (eternal, perpetual) and *héng* (enduring), both being used more or less synonymously to express the changeless, transcendent nature of *Tào:*

> *Tào* is forever *(héng)* nameless.
>
> *Lǎo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 32; cf. TTCW p.65*

> To know the constant *(ch'áng)* is to be all-embracing;
> To be all-embracing is to be impartial;
> To be impartial is to be kingly;
> To be kingly is to be (like) Heaven;
> To be (like) Heaven is to be (one with) the *Tào;*
> If you're (one with) the *Tào,*
> to the end of your days you'll suffer no harm.
>
> *Lǎo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 16, LTTC p.118*

Tào is Formless

Tào is both fully beyond forms, and is yet the cause, source and sustainer of forms. This is often expressed in Taoist literature by the concepts of *Wǔ* (Nonbeing) and *yǔ* (being). *Wǔ* is eternal and transcendent, while *yǔ* is immanent and manifested. The immanent aspect is also known through the principle, *té,* being that which expresses *Tào* in the created universe. This teaching is sometimes called transcendental dualism.

The fully transcendent aspect of *Tào* is also called *Wǔ Chí* (Ultimate or Supreme Nonbeing). This aspect of transcendence or Nonbeing *(Wǔ)* is considered the generator, but not the generated. The aspect of *Tào* that is associated with cause or being *(yǔ)* is called *T'ài Chí* (Ultimate of Being). It is the source of all that is generated, all that comes into being. Within the realm of *T'ài Chí* are emanated the further dual aspects of *yīn* and *yáng,* which express their dualism in the manifest world through the *wàn wù* (ten thousand things), which represents the myriad forms of creation. Lǎo Tzu observes:

> The great virtue *(té)* as manifested
> is but following *Tào.*
> *Tào* is a thing that is both invisible and intangible.
> Intangible and invisible,
> yet there are forms in It;
> Invisible and intangible,
> yet there is substance in It;
> Subtle and obscure,
> there is essence in It;

This essence being invariably true,
  there is faith in It.
From of old till now,
  It has never lost Its (nameless) Name,
  through which the origin of all things has passed.
How do I know that it is so with the origin of all things?
By this *(Tào)*.

Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 21, TTCT p.33

The formless or unmanifest aspect of *Tào* is also expressed in the idea of *hsū̆* (void, vacuity). This is a theme appearing repeatedly in Taoist literature to illustrate that aspect of *Tào* that transcends forms. The Taoist void, however, is not empty or devoid of forms. *Hsū̆* does not signify barren emptiness. It represents pure potentiality that encompasses an infinite supply of creative causes.

Lăo Tzu illustrates that *Tào* is a formless, yet infinitely creative power by using a variety of metaphors including empty vessel, hollow, abyss, valley, bellows and so on:

Tào, when put in use for Its hollowness,
  is not likely to be filled.
In Its profundity,
  It seems to be the origin of all things.
In Its depth, It seems ever to remain.
I do not know whose offspring It is,
  but It looks like the predecessor of Nature.

Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 4, TTCT p.15

Lăo Tzu tries to illustrate that emptiness or nonbeing *(wŭ)* is a necessary element in the cosmos, even in the physical creation:

Thirty spokes unite around the nave:
From their nonbeing *(wŭ)*
  arises the utility of the wheel.
Mould clay into a vessel:
From its nonbeing (in the vessel's hollow)
  arises the utility of the vessel.
Cut out doors and windows in the house:
  from their nonbeing (empty space)
  arises the utility of the house.
Therefore by the existence of things we profit.
And by the nonexistence of things we are served.

Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 11; cf. WLT p.87

And again:

What we look for beyond seeing,
and call the unseen;
Listen for beyond hearing,
and call the unheard;
Grasp for beyond reaching,
and call the withheld –
Merge, beyond understanding, in a oneness
which does not merely rise and give light,
does not merely set and leave darkness –
But forever sends forth a succession of living things
as mysterious as the unbegotten existence *(Wǔ)*
to which they return.

Lǎo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 14, WALT p.32

After Lǎo Tzu, the fourth-century (BCE) Chuāng Tzu is perhaps the best known early Taoist philosopher. In his writings, he echoes Lǎo Tzu on the mysterious and formless aspect of *Tào;* though formless and invisible, *Tào* is the Creator of all:

The Way *(Tào)* has Its reality and Its signs,
but is without action or form.
You can hand It down,
but you cannot receive It;
You can get at It,
but you cannot see It.
It is Its own source, Its own root.

Before Heaven and Earth existed,
It was there, firm from ancient times.
It gave spirituality to the spirits and to God;
It gave birth to Heaven and to Earth.
It exists beyond the highest point,
and yet you cannot call It lofty;
It exists beneath the limit of the six directions,
and yet you cannot call It deep.
It was born before Heaven and Earth,
yet you cannot say It has been there for long;
It is earlier than the earliest time,
and yet you cannot call It old.

Chuāng Tzu 6, CTW p.81

Té – The Manifested Aspect of *Tào*

Tào as manifested in the world of myriad objects, the world of ten thousand things, is the principle that Taoists call *té,* which is the active power of *Tào* in each object and being. *Té* represents each object's identity or unique attributes, manifested as vital energy *(ch'ì)* through the interactive balance of the dual principles of being, known as *yīn* and *yáng*. *Tào* is a continuous, infinite, dynamic field of power, expressing Itself in each individual object of creation through *té,* and the juxtaposition of *yīn* and *yáng* elements.

The duality of *yīn* and *yáng* is illustrated by the well-known Taoist symbol of a circle, showing white blending into black and *vice versa.* It illustrates that everything changes, nothing is permanent. Everything in the realm of existence is made up of a complement of *yīn* qualities and *yáng* qualities. Dark is complemented by light, growth by decay, evil by good, male by female, and so forth, in infinite dual combinations. Within each quality exists the seed of its complement, demonstrated in the circular symbol by a small dot of the opposite colour in each hemisphere. It illustrates that nothing is ever completely one sided or permanent in the realm of duality. Taoists call this metaphysical principle of change, *ì.* Chuāng Tzu expresses this when he writes:

> The Way *(Tào)* is without beginning or end,
> but things have their life and death –
> You cannot rely upon their fulfilment (permanence).
> One moment empty, the next moment full –
> you cannot depend on their form.
> The years cannot be held off,
> time cannot be stopped.
> Decay, growth, fullness and emptiness
> end and then begin again.
> It is thus that we must describe
> the plan of the Great Meaning,
> and discuss the principles of the ten thousand things.
> The life of things is a gallop, a headlong dash –
> with every movement they alter,
> with every moment they shift.
> What should you do and what should you not do?
> Everything will change of itself,
> that is certain!
>
> *Chuāng Tzu 17, CTW p.182*

Although the world of myriad objects is expressed through the combinations of *yīn* and *yáng* and the principle of *té,* it is still *Tào* that is the source of their qualities, properties and energy. It follows that the root of everything is *Tào.*

An appropriate story is told of Chuāng Tzu:

> Master Tūng Kuǒ asked Chuāng Tzu, "This thing called the Way *(Tào)* – where does It exist?"
> Chuāng Tzu said, "There's no place It doesn't exist."
> "Come," said Master Tūng Kuǒ, "you must be more specific!"
> "It is in the ant."
> "As low a thing as that?"
> "It is in the panic grass."
> "But that's lower still!"
> "It is in the tiles and shards."
> "How can It be so low?"
> "It is in the piss and shit."
>
> *Chuāng Tzu 22, CTW pp.240–41*

Tào as a Way of Life

To the Taoist, *Tào* is used to describe many things: the great transcendental power; the primal creative force or cause of the created universe; the mundane workings of nature through *té* – the manifestation of *Tào;* as well as the name of the path the disciple must follow in order to attain mystical union with the same *Tào.*

The secret of enlightenment, therefore, lies in developing conscious awareness of *Tào.* According to Taoist tradition, this is engendered by a simple contemplative life centring on detached and egoless actions, referred to as *wǔ wéi* (non-action). This process of detachment and the resulting state of *wǔ wéi,* so the Taoist believes, naturally brings about good moral behaviour through an ever growing awareness of the interconnectedness of all life forms. Lǎo Tzu emphasizes the virtues of a simple life and of *wǔ wéi:*

> He who pursues learning will increase every day;
> He who pursues *Tào* will decrease every day.
> He will decrease and continue to decrease,
> till he comes to non-action *(wǔ wéi);*
> By non-action everything can be done.
>
> *Lǎo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 48, TTCT p.63*

Just as *Wǔ* (*lit.* without) is sometimes used by the Taoist to signify the Nonbeing or voidlike quality of *Tào,* so too does *wǔ* also relate to a student of the Way who endeavours to create a state of *wǔ* or nonbeing within himself. This is necessary in order to experience the transcendental *Tào.* As Lǎo Tzu implies, it is a process of decreasing that must be developed within one's own being – the purging of desires, knowledge, self-importance and attachments that comprise the ego, in order to experience *Tào* within:

Therefore, some people constantly dwell in nonbeing *(wŭ)*
because they seek to perceive Its mysteries,
while some constantly dwell in being *(yŭ)*,
because they seek to perceive its boundaries.
These two are of the same origin,
but have different names;
Together they are called abstruse –
abstruse and again abstruse;
This is the gate of all mysteries.

Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 1, LTTN pp.51

Lăo Tzu suggests that the formless, changeless, transcendent aspect of *Tào* (Nonbeing) and the created, immanent aspect of *Tào* (being) are really part of the same great mystery. It is when men "constantly dwell in being" or ego that only the manifest aspect of *Tào* can be perceived. Hence, "They seek to perceive its boundaries." The "gate of all mysteries" that Lăo Tzu refers to is that both the transcendent and manifested aspects of *Tào* are really (at a certain level of conscious awareness) one and the same. As Lăo Tzu says, "These two are of the same origin, but have different names." When a person sees through the realm of duality, and thereby experiences the transcendent *Tào,* both the transcendent and the manifest are realized to be "of the same origin", with *Tào* as their source.

When this state of consciousness is achieved, a man becomes a *chēn jén* (a true or perfect man). Then he actually becomes an embodiment of *Tào* because his consciousness experiences nothing but *Tào.* This is akin to the Vedantic precept *Tat tvam asi* (thou art That), where the yogi comes to the realization that the entire cosmos and the Creator Himself are within himself. When the yogi merges his being in this Reality, he becomes the cosmos and the Creator of the cosmos.

A Taoist anecdote provides some indication of this state of consciousness. A Taoist student, Kuō Chiu, is visited by two Taoist Immortals *(Hsiēn).* In an apparent test, the student is asked the object of his spiritual meditations:

"*Tào* alone," he replied, "is the object which I have in view."

"And where is *Tào?*" asked the two *Hsiēn.* Kuō Chiu pointed up to Heaven. "Where then is Heaven?" Kuō Chiu pointed to his heart.

The two Immortals smiled and said: "The heart is one with Heaven, and Heaven is one with *Tào?* Indeed, you have a true understanding of things." And accordingly admitted him to the company of Immortals.

Taoist Anecdote; cf. in GCI p.124

In many schools of Taoism a distinction is made between *T'iēn Tào,* the *Tào* of Heaven, and *jén tào,* the *tào* of man. *Jén tào* pertains to daily living, and includes morality and spiritual practices. *T'iēn Tào* pertains to the law of spirit and divine Truth. *Jén tào* is adherence to *T'iēn Tào* at the human level, resulting naturally in a virtuous and moral life. When followed to its fullest extent, *T'iēn Tào* brings about *fù yüén* (return to source), also called *huăn gēn* (return to root). The Source or Root returned to is *Tào:*

> Going back to the origin is called peace;
> It means reversion to destiny.
> Reversion to destiny is called eternity.
> He who knows eternity is called enlightened.
>
> *Lǎo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 16, TTCT p.28*

It is believed in Taoism that morality occurs naturally when a person lives in harmony with *Tào.* Otherwise, when a person acts immorally or unkindly, in common Chinese parlance he is said to disregard *jén tào* or to be 'without' *tào té,* the Divine residing within the human being. When man understands his immutable relationship with *Tào,* he also knows his relationship with the world and all living beings. Since all is *Tào,* and *Tào* is divine, then all creatures share in that divinity, and the man of *Tào* naturally treats all with genuine regard.

See also: **ch'áng** (2.1), **divine Music (Taoism)** (3.2), **Hsiēn** (▸2), **T'ài Chí**, **T'ài Hsüán**, **T'ài Ī** (2.1), **T'ài Shǐh**, **té** (5.2), **tzù ján**, **Wǔ**, **Wǔ Chí**, **yīn yáng** (5.2), **yǔ**.

1. R.B. Blakney, *Introduction, Tao Te Ching, WLLT* p.17.

tathātā (S) *Lit.* that way *(tathā)* -ness *(tā);* such-ness, that-ness; the true state of things; a term from *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, also used in Zen Buddhism, referring to the essential nature of something, especially absolute Reality and the self.

Tathātā is a non-descriptive way of indicating that a thing is what it is, not anything else. It implies that any description of a thing or comparison of it with something else is not the thing itself. In the Bible, for instance, *Yahweh* says, "I am that I am,"[1] implying, "not what anything else is." Likewise, ultimate Reality as well as the true nature of the self is what it is, and not the way the mind describes it or conceives of it.

1. *Exodus* 3:14, *KJV.*

tatt (Pu), **tattva** (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* that *(tad, tatt)* -ness *(tva);* thus, essence; mystically, the divine Essence, absolute Reality; sometimes called *tattva vastu*, meaning the thing or object *(vastu)* that is the Essence, that which is truly or essentially real, that which really exists, the real thing, the thing itself, the Essence of all essences.

Guru Arjun says that the divine Reality *(Tatt)* is the Essence or Reality behind all other created forms:

The same gold is fashioned into various varieties:
Similarly, from within Himself alone,
the Lord has made the creation of many patterns.
Says Nānak, the *Guru* dispelled my doubt:
gold ornaments ultimately become gold.
In the same way human reality *(tatt)*,
eventually, blends with divine Reality *(Tatt)*.

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 205, MMS

Kabīr says that the soul, the "bride", has sought everywhere within the "nine apertures" of the body, but has not found Reality *(Tatt)*:

The bride (soul) who goes amiss by seeing the body of nine apertures,
obtains not the peerless Thing *(Bast)* of God's Name.
Says Kabīr, save (without) the real Thing *(Tatt)*,
which is contained in the tenth gate,
the thieves plunder the body of nine apertures.

Kabīr, Ādi Granth 339, MMS

And Guru Amardās says that when the individual "essence *(tatt)*" merges with the divine "Essence *(Tatt)*", all wanderings in the realm of birth and death come to an end:

Nānak, he whose essence *(tatt)* is merged with Lord's Essence *(Tatt)*,
does not, again, come under the purview of birth.

Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 162, MMS

See also: **param Tattva, tattva** (5.1).

Truth (He. *Emet*) The quality of being true, genuine, real, actual, factual. A term with a wide-ranging spread of meaning which in a mystical context includes Truth as reality both in a general sense as well as more specifically as the supreme Reality or God, and also as the Word or creative Power. To the

Jewish biblical writers, Truth *(Emet)* was an essential aspect of God. In *Exodus,* He is described as

> the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering,
> and abundant in goodness and Truth.
>
> *Exodus 34:6, JCL*

In the *Psalms,* He is a "God of Truth":

> Into Your hand I commit my spirit:
> You have redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth.
> I hate those who regard lying vanities,
> but I trust in the Lord.
>
> *Psalm 31:6–7, JCL*

His Truth "reaches to the clouds":

> I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples,
> and I will sing praises to You among the nations.
> For Your lovingkindness is great above the heavens,
> and Your Truth reaches to the clouds.
> Be exalted, O God, above the heavens,
> and Your glory above all the earth.
>
> *Psalm 108:4–6, JCL*

His Truth is a beacon to guide the devotee:

> O send out Your light and Your Truth:
> let them lead me;
> Let them bring me to Your holy mountain,
> and to Your dwelling places.
> Then I will go to the altar of God,
> to God my great joy.
>
> *Psalm 43:3–4, JCL*

His Truth is the pathway to God:

> Examine me, O Lord, and test me:
> test my insides and my heart.
> For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes,
> and I have walked in Your Truth.
>
> *Psalm 26:2–3, JCL*

Lead me in Your Truth *(Emet)*, and teach me;
For You are the God of my salvation;
For You I wait all the day.

Psalm 25:5, JCL

Mystic writers sometimes use the term in a general sense, to mean all aspects of the Truth, as in John's gospel, where Jesus – as the Word – says:

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life:
no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 14:6, KJV

And:

He that doeth the Truth, cometh to the Light,
that his deeds may be made manifest,
that they are wrought in God.

John 3:21, KJV

And:

The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers
shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth:
For the Father seeketh such to worship Him.

John 4:23, KJV

Terms meaning 'Truth', in different languages, have always been favoured by seekers after the mystic Reality, for they see the divine Source as the underlying Truth of all existence. As every mystic has said, the mystic Truth is not discovered by thinking about it. Hence, the writer of the gnostic *Eugnostos the Blessed* observes:

The wisest among them (philosophers) have speculated about the Truth from the ordering (beginning) of the world. And the speculation has not reached the Truth.

Eugnostos the Blessed 70, NHS27 p.42

Speaking of God as the "incomprehensible, inconceivable One", the writer of the *Gospel of Truth* goes on to say:

The established Truth is immutable,
imperturbable, perfect in beauty.

Gospel of Truth 17, NHS22 pp.82–83

The enigmatic writer of the *Gospel of Philip* suggests that all of creation, and everything that happens in it, has a purpose. Everything is being created by the eternal Truth, but the divine will or purpose is hidden or secret:

> Truth, which existed since the beginning,
> is sown everywhere,
> and many see it being sown.
> But few are they who see it being reaped.
>
> *Gospel of Philip 55, NHS20 pp.150–51*

He also contrasts this world with the world of Truth:

> This world is a corpse eater:
> all the things eaten in it themselves die also.
> Truth is a life eater:
> therefore no one nourished by (Truth) will die.
> It was from that place (of Truth)
> that Jesus came and brought (spiritual) food.
> To those who so desired, he gave life
> that they might not die.
>
> *Gospel of Philip 73, NHS20 pp.188–89*

Again, one of the commonest Mandaean refrains was "Truth *(Kūshṭā)* make you whole", where the "Truth" of which they spoke was clearly the eternal Truth of God. He is

> the Truth *(Kūshṭā)* that was aforetime, in the Beginning,
> who was mightier in His radiance than the worlds of light.
>
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 77, CPM p.85*

The *Ẓaddik* or Teacher of Righteousness, to whom the psalms found among the *Dead Sea Scrolls* have often been ascribed, uses the term in a general sense that probably has a veiled meaning as the Word, since elsewhere in these psalms the writer does speak explicitly of the creative Power. Writing of worldly people as "those who rebel", "traitors" (to God) and the "assembly of the wicked", he says that he has been a "counsel of Truth", a "discerning interpreter of wonderful mysteries" and a "man of peace" to the "elect of righteousness" who "see Truth":

> I have been a snare to those who rebel,
> but healing to those of them who repent;
> Prudence to the simple,
> and steadfastness to the fearful of heart.

To traitors, Thou hast made of me
a mockery and scorn;
But a counsel of Truth and understanding
to the upright of way....

I have been a byword to traitors,
the assembly of the wicked has raged against me;
They have roared like turbulent seas,
and their towering waves have spat out mud and slime.
But to the elect of righteousness,
Thou hast made me a banner,
and a discerning interpreter of wonderful mysteries....
To the interpreters of error, I have been an opponent,
but a man of peace to all those who see Truth.

Thanksgiving Hymns II:5–15 (1), DSSE p.169; cf. X:5–15 (6), CDSS pp.256–57

In another of these psalms, the meaning is more obviously that of the Word, for he thanks God that He has "enlightened me through Thy Truth". In this context, Truth is clearly something that can provide spiritual enlightenment:

I thank Thee, O Lord,
for Thou hast enlightened me through Thy Truth.
In Thy marvellous mysteries,
and in Thy lovingkindness to a man of vanity,
and in the greatness of Thy mercy to a perverse heart,
Thou hast granted me knowledge.

Who is like Thee among the gods, O Lord,
and who is according to Thy Truth?
Who, when he is judged,
shall be righteous before Thee?

Thanksgiving Hymns XV:25–30 (16), CDSS pp.276–77

Being "granted ... knowledge" of "Thy marvellous mysteries" is the result of this enlightenment. The meaning is entirely mystical.

See also: **al-Ḥaqīqah**, **sat**.

tzù ján (zì rán) (C) *Lit.* self so, naturally so; that which it is. *Tào* is self-generating, there is nothing that precedes *Tào,* nothing that can truly describe *Tào.* *Tzù ján* embodies the idea of *Tào* as beyond names, forms and limitations.

The *Tào* in all respects follows the course of that which is natural to It, and therefore is of Itself what It is. Lăo Tzu gives some idea of this in the *Tào Té Chīng:*

> Man is in accordance with Earth.
> Earth is in accordance with Heaven.
> Heaven is in accordance with *Tào.*
> *Tào* is in accordance with that which is *(tzù ján).*
>
> *Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 25, TNWT p.72*

Tzù ján also is used to describe the natural cycle and flow of the universe as well as the natural state to which a man aspires in order to become conscious of *Tào.*

See also: **P'ŭ**, **Tào**.

vāch, **vāk** (H/Pu) *Lit.* speech, talk, voice; also, that which can be spoken, written or read; that which is visible or manifest; hence, gross, phenomenal, manifest, outward, superficial; often contrasted with *laksh.*

Vāch is the word or name of a thing, while *laksh* is the thing itself. There is a fundamental distinction between a thing and its verbal description. One is a direct experience or perception of the senses, while the other is a construction of words, conveyed by writing or speech. The distinction is particularly pertinent in relationship to the reality of God and His creative Power as contrasted with humanly ascribed names. The distinction is the same as that between *varṇātmak* and *dhunātmak.*

The word is also used in a verb form:

> Some read *(vāche)* books, the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas;*
> some sit down, read to others and hear with their ears.
> Say, how can the huge shutters be opened? –
> without the true *Guru,* Quintessence *(Tatta)* can be obtained not.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1043, MMS*

Among Hindu deities, *Vāch* is another name for *Sarasvatī,* the goddess of speech, and the daughter of *Brahmā.*

Vāch (speech) is also one of the five motor *indriyas* by which a human being performs bodily actions.

See also: **Bachan** (3.1), **dhunātmak**, **laksh**, **Vāch** (3.1), **varṇātmak**.

varṇātmak(a) (S/H), **barṇātmik** (Pu) *Lit.* comprised of *(ātmak)* letter *(varṇa)*; that which is made up of or expressed in letters; descriptive; that which can be read, written, spoken or articulated by the tongue or within the human mind; the names and descriptions of things as opposed to the things themselves, particularly as regards mystic or esoteric realities.

In all mystic teachings, there is the verbal teaching; this is *varṇātmak*. There is also the inner experience itself which the *varṇātmak* teachings attempt to describe; this is *dhunātmak*. In fact, many terms used in mystic teachings have an exoteric or worldly meaning, as well as an esoteric meaning, referring to an inner reality which can be experienced, but which is impossible to convey in words. Both the exoteric and esoteric words and meaning are *varṇātmak*, while the experience itself is *dhunātmak*. *Varṇātmak* and *dhunātmak* thus refer, respectively, to descriptions of experience and the experience itself.

See also: **dhunātmak**.

varṇātmak nām (H) *Lit.* lettered, utterable or descriptive *(varṇātmak)* name *(nām)*; a name that can be conveyed in letters *(varṇa)*; that name which can be spoken, written, read or held in the mind in the form of words; particularly, the spoken or written names of God and His creative Power.

The followers of the various religions generally lay great emphasis upon their particular verbal names of God. These names, however, have all been created by man. They have a history in time. Islam lists ninety-nine names of *Allāh* (from a selection of well over a hundred); Hindus have over a thousand names for *Vishṇu;* and the *Dasam Granth,* one of the Sikh texts, lists over a thousand names of God. The purpose in so doing is to indicate that there is nothing eternal in a name itself. It is the Reality to which the name points that is important. The *Vedas* say:

> The wise have called the one Reality by different names.
>
> *Ṛig Veda 1:164.46*

The real, inexpressible or *dhunātmak* Name of God that gives salvation is His creative Power, His Word or Sound vibrating and pulsating in all things, keeping the creation in existence. This *Nām* has no beginning or end in time. It is self-existent and coexistent with God. It is a higher Reality that can only be experienced. It cannot be conveyed in words.

Names such as *Om, Hari Om, Govind, Mādho, Khudā, Allāh, Yahweh, Adonai,* Lord, God, Father and so on are all *varṇātmak*. None of these can transport the soul to higher regions. Hence, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes:

Religious sects and the world are busy in *varṇātmak nām:*
only a Saint knows the secret of the Sound *(Dhun).*
Religious men repeat *varṇātmak nām,*
but their effort is fruitless.
They have not discovered the secret of the Sound *(Dhun),*
the (true) fruit of the Name *(Nām)* has not come into their hands.
They repeat *(varṇātmak nām)* thousands and millions of times,
but their inner eye does not open.
They have not realized the secret of the Sound *(Dhun),*
and the Being from whom it emanates.
Their soul *(surat)* is not absorbed in the Word *(Shabd).*

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 10:1:20–23, 25, SBP p.96

Varṇātmak nām also refers to the holy names or *mantra* given by a Master to his disciples, the repetition of which is known as *simran.* The mental repetition of these names leads to concentration of the mind and soul at the eye centre, and ultimately to the experience of the real or *dhunātmak* Name of God, the Sound or unstruck Music. Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh devotes an entire poem to the difference between *varṇātmak nām* and *dhunātmak Nām:*

I will now discuss the Name, my brother.
It is of two kinds.
I will call the one *varṇātmak,*
and the other *dhunātmak,*
and will point out the difference between the two.

That which is uttered by the tongue
is a syllable or a letter.
That which is written and read
is called *varṇātmak nām.*
This name points to the inner Sound *(Dhun),*
but without the *Guru,* it bears no fruit.
If a *Guru* is met who is an adept
in the secrets of the Sound *(Dhun),* he will enable the soul
to unite with the Sound *(Dhun)* and its source.
If such a Master is found, he will help the soul
become one with the Name *(Nām)* and the Named *(Nāmī).*

The *varṇātmak nām* is first repeated (*i.e. simran,* repetition),
then the *dhunātmak Nām* and its source are reached.
Cleanse the mind and the soul with *varṇātmak nām,*
and then ascend to the inner sky
and attune yourself to the inner Sound *(Dhun).*

Know the Sound *(Dhun)* and its source to be one,
and let the soul *(surat)* realize the inner Sound *(Shabd)*.
When the soul *(surat)* and the *Shabd* merge into one,
then the *dhunātmak Nām* is realized.

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 10:1.1–11, SBP p.95

varṇātmak shabd (H) *Lit.* utterable *(varṇātmak)* word *(shabd)*; that sound which can be spoken or uttered by the tongue, as opposed to the inner mystic Word or *dhunātmak Shabd*, which sustains the entire creation, and must be experienced to be understood.

See also: **varṇātmak nām**.

vastu, bast, bastu (H/Pu) *Lit.* thing, object, article; esoterically, any really existing or abiding substance or essence; the real thing; the true spiritual treasure or wealth; also as *sat vastu*, the true *(sat)* thing or object, the true or abiding reality, the true or abiding wealth; the real as opposed to the unreal; the permanent or eternal as opposed to the impermanent; absolute Reality. *Vastu* can be plural or singular (*e.g.* thing or things), depending on the context. The word is commonly found in mystic literature.

Dādū, for example, writes of *bastu* with a double meaning. He speaks of the master of the house (the soul) who sleeps while thieves (human imperfections, the mind) steal his goods (*bastu*, spiritual wealth):

The master of the house who sleeps
cannot protect his goods *(bastu)*:
Thieves will surround his house and plunder it.
With no one on guard in the vicinity,
the goods *(bastu)* are sure to be stolen.
Tell me, what use will it be,
to rise after the goods *(bastu)* are gone?
It will be of little avail then,
for the night that is gone will not return.
He who keeps timely watch,
no harm will befall his goods *(bastu)*.
Knowing this to be so, says Dādū,
act accordingly.

Dādū, Bānī 2, Shabd 137:1–3, DDB2 pp.44–45

Paltū says that this wealth can only be found through the help of a Saint:

The reality of the thing *(vastu)* is not known,
even if it be in your possession.
Says Paltū, whatever is known
is known through the company of the Saint.

Paltū, Bānī 2, Aril 77, PSB2 p.73

Thus, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh says:

> Be it also known that when anyone comes to them, it is a way with the Saints to talk and dilate only on the abiding reality *(sat vastu),* that is, *Sat Purush Rādhā Swāmī* (the true Lord, the Lord of the Soul).
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Prose 1:48, SB p.29*

See also: **tattva**.

waḥdah (A), **vaḥdat** (P) *Lit.* unity, oneness; the first stirrings within the divine Essence of the consciousness of existence, of the possibility of creation; the unity that excludes all multiplicity.

See also: **aḥadīyah**, **waḥdānīyah**, **wāḥid**, **wāḥidīyah**.

waḥdānīyah (A), **vaḥdānīyat** (P) *Lit.* unity, oneness; that aspect of the divine Unity from where the creation is emanated through the *Logos;* also called *wāḥidīyah;* also, the belief in the oneness of God.

Vaḥdānīyat is below *aḥadīyat* (absolute oneness), as well as *vaḥdat,* the first consciousness of existence within the divine Unity:

> A consciousness arose out of the Absolute, the consciousness of Existence. There was nothing of which the Absolute could be conscious, except Existence. This stage is called *vaḥdat.* Out of this consciousness of existence a sense developed, a sense 'that I exist'. It was a development of the consciousness of existence. It was this development which formed the first Ego, the *Logos,* which is termed *vaḥdānīyat* by the Sufis.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK1 p.111*

Vaḥdat is the unity that excludes all multiplicity, the first stirrings within the divine Essence of the consciousness of existence, of the 'desire' to create. *Vaḥdānīyat* is the unity that includes all multiplicity. The *Logos* or Creative Word is the "first Ego" in the sense that it is the first element of separation or separate 'identity' within the unity of God.

See also: **aḥadīyah**, **ta'ayyun** (4.1), **wāḥid**, **wāḥidīyah**.

wāḥid (A/P) *Lit.* one; the number 'one'. *Al-Wāḥid,* meaning the One, the Single, the Unique, is one of the ninety-nine Islamic names of *Allāh:*

> And your God is one *(wāḥid)* God:
> There is no god but He,
> Most Gracious, Most Merciful.
>
> *Qur'ān 2:163, AYA*

Wāḥid means the number 'one', which implies that there are also 'two' and 'three' and 'many'. Thus, the Lord is the *wāḥid* (one) out of whom the creation emanates. *Wāḥid* is differentiated from *aḥad,* which means 'one' in an absolute, limitless, all-encompassing sense. Technically, *wāḥidīyah* (oneness) is the level of the divine Unity from which the *Logos* (the creative Power) originates. *Aḥadīyah* is absolute, all-encompassing oneness, though nevertheless below the level of the ultimate divine Essence *(Dhāt).*

The Lord, as *al-Wāḥid* (the One), is the speaker of the divine command, "Be!", which brings the creation into existence. The Lord as *al-Wāḥid* may be called the 'personal God'. If He is called 'Lord', then there is also a creation over which to rule. Otherwise, the name 'Lord' is meaningless. If he is called 'Beloved', there is also a 'lover'. If He is called 'Merciful', there is also that over which He can exercise His mercy.

Thus, *al-Aḥad* (the absolute One) refers to a level of oneness that is beyond *al-Wāḥid.* At the level of *al-Aḥad* there is no lover, nor beloved, but only Love itself. There is no knower, nor any known, but only Truth itself. There is no Lord, nor any creation, but only Oneness.

See also: **aḥadīyah**, **al-Asmā' al-Ḥusná** (2.1), **waḥdānīyah**, **wāḥidīyah**.

wāḥidīyah (A), **vāḥidīyat** (P) *Lit.* unity, oneness; the oneness that includes all plurality; from *wāḥid,* the number one; also called *waḥdānīyah;* below the level of *aḥadīyah,* meaning oneness in an absolute sense, the divine Unity beyond all possibility of plurality.

In Sufi technical terms, *aḥadīyah* and *wāḥidīyah* are specific planes of consciousness. First below the boundless, formless, unmanifested Essence *(Dhāt)* of God is *aḥadīyah* (absolute oneness); then comes *waḥdah,* a oneness that excludes all plurality, the first stirrings within the Divine of a consciousness of existence, of the possibility of creation. Then comes *wāḥidīyah,* the oneness that includes all plurality, and from which the creative Power, the *Logos,* actually emanates.

Aḥadīyah is derived from *aḥad,* meaning 'one' in an absolute sense, beyond all possibility of another. *Wāḥidīyah* and *waḥdah* are derived from *wāḥid,* meaning the number one, which implies the existence of others.

This distinction between *aḥadīyah* and *wāḥidīyah* parallels the distinction between God's transcendence and His immanence – in Islamic terms, *tanzīh* and *tashbīh.* God is an absolute Oneness that is utterly beyond, above and transcending the multitudinous forms of the creation *(aḥadīyah, tanzīh);* and He is also a oneness that pervades and is immanently hidden within the plurality of forms *(wāḥidīyah, tashbīh).*

See also: **al-Aḥad**, **aḥadīyah**, **ta'ayyun** (4.1), **tanzīh**, **tashbīh** (4.1), **waḥdānīyah**, **wāḥid**.

Wājib al-Wujūd (A), **Vājib al-Vujūd** (P) *Lit.* Necessary *(wājib)* Existence *(Wujūd);* the Necessary Being; sometimes called simply *al-Wājib,* the Necessary. The Being whose existence is necessary, who is self-existent, who inherently and necessarily must exist. This is only God. In Muslim philosophy, there are three classes of Being: the Necessary Being *(Wājib al-Wujūd),* a possible or conditional being *(mumkin al-wujūd)* and an impossible being *(mumtani' al-wujūd).*

The impossible being is any associate or partner of God. This cannot be. Thus, *Wājib al-Wujūd* is contrasted with the *mumkināt* (contingent, possible or conditional beings). Only God is the Necessary Being; all others are contingent or conditional; they are possible beings; they may or may not exist, and such existence as they have is derived from the Necessary Being.

If all beings may be divided into two classes – those who have a beginning and those who have no beginning – then only God belongs to the latter class. All beings who have a beginning are derived from the one and only necessary Being. This terminology was used extensively by Ibn 'Arabī and his followers. The Persian Sufi, 'Azīz al-Dīn Nasafī, also writes:

> There are two conditions pertaining to the existence of a being: the being has a beginning or he has none. If he has no beginning, the being is primeval; and if he has a beginning, the being is phenomenal. This is a very obvious matter. However, even though a being or created being is phenomenal, he also has a primeval existence, because no phenomenon can exist without a primeval origin.
>
> The primeval Being whose existence is necessary is almighty God, knowledgeable, powerful and possessing a will. The phenomenal beings, who out of necessity must have their origin in that primeval Unity, are called 'possible existence' and are God's creation. *Vājib al-Vujūd* must have knowledge, power and will, because without these three attributes, no one can bring something into being.
>
> *Nasafī, al-Insān al-Kāmil 2:1, IK pp.38–39*

Thus Rūmī observes that God is all that is; even the world itself has no reality other than Him:

> The world itself is no more than one person and one beauty:
> every star in the sky is part of the moon.
> The world itself is no more than one Person,
> and the rest are just followers and parasites on Him.
> He Himself is a complete world and unique:
> the blueprint of existence belongs to Him.
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I, MMM1 p.75, MR1 p.307; cf. MJR2 (I:2926) p.159*

See also: **dā'irat al-imkān** (4.1), **mumkin** (4.1).

Wǔ (Wǔ) (C) *Lit.* without, no-thing; formless; hence, that which transcends material existence or phenomena; Nonbeing, vacuity, infinite creative potentiality; the converse of *yǔ,* meaning being or that which has form, which only exists because of *Wǔ* or Nonbeing. *Yǔ* comes into being out of *Wǔ;* being comes into existence out of Nonbeing. That which exists *(yǔ)* emanated from the pure potentiality of emptiness or void, as sound comes from silence, or light from darkness:

> The myriad things of the universe
> are engendered from being *(yǔ);*
> And being *(yǔ)* is in turn
> engendered from Nonbeing *(Wǔ).*
> *Lǎo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 40, LTTN p.103*

See also: **Tào**.

Wǔ Chí (Wǔ Jí) (C) *Lit.* without *(wǔ)* limits *(chí);* infinite, without extremities; the Ultimate of Nonbeing, beyond all creation. *Wǔ Chí* is synonymous with that aspect of *Tào* that is fully transcendent; It is the Generator, not the generated. It is *Tào*'s aspect of Nonbeing *(Wǔ),* as opposed to being *(yǔ),* the immanent or generated principle of *Tào,* also called *T'ài Chí* (Great Ultimate of Being). *Wǔ Chí* is the transcendent, infinite Source:

> If you are a model to the empire,
> then the constant virtue will not be wanting,
> and you will return to the Infinite *(Wǔ Chí).*
> *Lǎo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 28, TTCL p.85*

See also: **Tào**.

wujūd, al- (A), **vujūd** (P) *Lit.* being, existence; also, finding, experiencing. When contrasted with *'Adam* (Nonbeing, Nonexistence), *wujūd* refers to manifested existence. Thus al-Ghazālī writes:

> God is Manifest *(al-Ẓāhir)*, and by Him all things are made manifest, for that which is manifest in itself, which makes all other things manifest, is Light, and whenever existence *(al-wujūd)* confronts Nonexistence *(al-'Adam)*, then undoubtedly existence *(al-wujūd)* is made manifest and there is no darkness darker than Nonexistence *(al-'Adam)*. Now that which is free from the darkness of Nonexistence *(al-'Adam)*, yea, even from the possibility of Nonexistence *(al-'Adam)*, which brings all things out of Nonexistence *(al-'Adam)* into the manifestation of existence *(al-wujūd)*, is worthy to be called Light. Existence *(al-wujūd)* is light outpoured upon all things from the Light of His Essence, who is the Light of the heavens and the earth.
>
> *Al-Ghazālī, al-Maqṣad al-Asnā Sharḥ Asmā' Allāh, MAAA p.146, in GMS p.108*

For Rūmī also, *vujūd* sometimes means 'existence', meaning phenomenal existence, in contrast to divine Nonexistence *(Nīstī, 'Adam)*.[1] He also uses *vujūd* to refer to self-existence and ego.[2]

However, *al-Wujūd* (the Being) and *al-Wujūd al-muṭlaq* (the absolute Being) are also names for the self-existent God. For Ibn 'Arabī, *wujūd* referred to both the Essence, the One, the Absolute, the Truth, the Real – that is, to God who is eternal and unchanging – as well as to the essential divine essence in the existence of the created universe, since "all of it is existent":

> Concerning the entities of the cosmos, it is said that they are neither identical with the Real *(al-Ḥaqq)*, nor other than the Real. On the contrary, *wujūd* is all Real. However, some of what is Real is described as created, and some is described as not created, while all of it is existent.
>
> *Ibn 'Arabī, Meccan Revelations 3:419.34, in SPK p.212*

Ibn 'Arabī and others have also used *wujūd* for the experience of finding the Real, for the ecstatic state of expanded being, consciousness or awareness in which the seeker moves closer to God.

See also: **al-Dhāt** (2.2), **hast**, **Wājib al-Wujūd**, **wujūd** (▸2).

1. See W.C. Chittick, *Sufi Path of Love, SPL* p.23.
2. See W.C. Chittick, *Sufi Path of Love, SPL* p.173.

yŭ (yŏu) (C) *Lit.* to have being; in the metaphysical sense, the being or existence that comes from Nonbeing; the created universe that emanates from the void or transcendent aspect of *Tào,* sometimes referred to as *Wŭ* (Nonbeing) and *Wŭ Chí* (great Nonbeing). The classic Taoist text, *Huái Nán Tzu,* gives a description of the beginning of the created universe:

> When Heaven and Earth were joined in emptiness, and all was unwrought simplicity, then without having been created, things came into being (as things). This was the Great Oneness. All things issued from this Oneness, but all became different, being divided into the various species of fish, birds and beasts.... If we examine the Great Beginning of antiquity, we find that man was born out of Nonbeing *(Wŭ)* to assume form in being *(yŭ).* Having form, he is governed by things. But he who can return to that from which he was born, and become as though formless, is called a true man. The true man is he who has never become separated from the Great Oneness.
>
> *Huái Nán Tzu 14:1a, SCT p.193*

See also: **T'ài Chí, Tào, Wŭ, Wŭ Chí**.